

Translated
by
RAGHUNATHAN

Srimad-Bhagavatam

SRIMAD BHĀGAVATAM

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by
N. RAGHUNATHAN

VOL. II

VPh

VIGHNESWARA PUBLISHING HOUSE
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Mr. N. Raghunathan is a brilliant writer, a profound scholar in English and Sanskrit and the doyen of Indian journalism. He is an M.A. of the Madras University with First Class Honours in English Language and Literature. After 30 years as Assistant Editor of the **Hindu**, the well-known national English daily of Madras, he retired as its chief editorial executive in 1957 and has since been engaged in Sanskrit and Indological studies. He has published **Sotto Voce**, a four-volume collection of weekly cause-ries, which he contributed to a Madras weekly from 1946 to 1959. It has won for him recognition as one of the foremost Indian writers of English, with an individual style, provocative, witty and memorable, and as a student of affairs with uncanny political insight and a deep commitment to the abiding values of Indian culture. His Madras University Lectures on **Reason and Intuition in Indian Culture** won appreciation as a book that highlights the dynamic quality of Hinduism and 'can contribute significantly to the understanding of traditional Indian religion and culture.'

In addition to the **Bhagavatam**, Mr. Raghunathan has translated the entire Valmiki Ramayanam in English prose and a selection of the longer poems of old Tamil in verse. He is currently at work on the rendering of Kalidasa's poems in English verse.

Srimad - Bhagavatam, traditionally accepted as one of the eighteen 'great Puranas', is the Bhakti scripture par excellence. It has inspired the growth of extensive devotional literature not only in Sanskrit but also in many other Indian languages ; and it is revered by important religious movements as one of the corner-stones of their faith. Though it has been translated into practically every Indian language, European scholars, with the notable exception of the French scholar Burnouf who translated parts of it over a hundred years ago, have not turned their attention to it. Many distinguished European scholars have expressed the view that there is need for an authentic new translation of Srimad-Bhagavatam, which in the words of Prof. D. H. Ingalls stands out by reason of 'its literary excellence, the organisation that it brings to its vast material and the effect that it has had on later writers'.

The present work, based on a careful comparison of the different textual traditions as reflected in the numerous commentaries, aims at providing a reliable and authentic translation in euphonious, lucid prose, which shall be idiomatic, faithful and exact without being too literal (or word for word). It provides, besides, all the explanatory material that the general reader might require for a full appreciation of the text, a minimum of foot-notes, a glossary, brief biographical notes and a select subject index, as well as a synopsis of the contents (for Volume One). The special notes at the end should be found helpful by the student and the specialist.

This translation should convey to the reader something of the extraordinary poetic quality of the original and of the aroma of mystic devotion, which is the secret of the **Bhagavatam's** perennial popularity.

The second volume opens with two books. The Eighth contains two universally popular stories, that of the lordly tusker that was saved from the crocodile, and the churning of the ocean of milk for nectar, as well as the elevating account of Bali, whose staunchness in truth could not be shaken by all the arts that the Lord could summon. The Ninth Book embroiders on the theme 'And now let us praise famous men'. We hear of Chyavana, the sage, and Sukanya, his loyal spouse, of Ambarisha and Durvasas, of Harischandra and Pururavas, of Yayati and Sri Rama, the story of whose life is a jewel-like cameo. But in this volume it is Sri Krishna that holds the centre of the stage. The Divine child of Vrndavana, the darling of the Gopis, the Protector of Righteousness, the teacher of the transcendental wisdom and the comrade of Kuchela—the myriad facets of God Who came as man and yet remained indisputably God—are displayed with rare art in the famous Tenth and Eleventh Books by that connoisseur of the spirit in its heights and its depths, the sage Suka.

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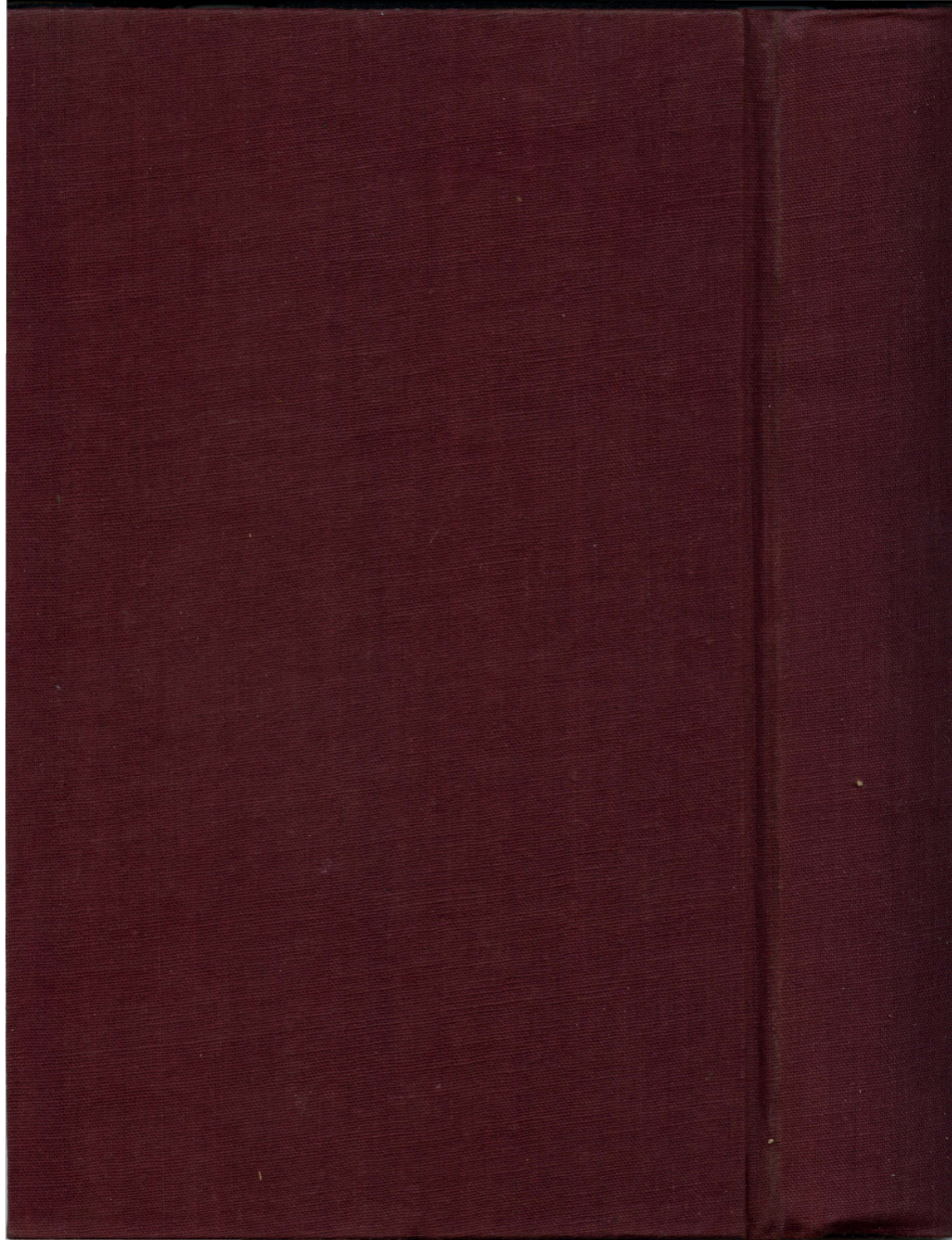
Srimad-Bhagavatam

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VOL. II



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who light the flame of divine love
in the hearts of men*

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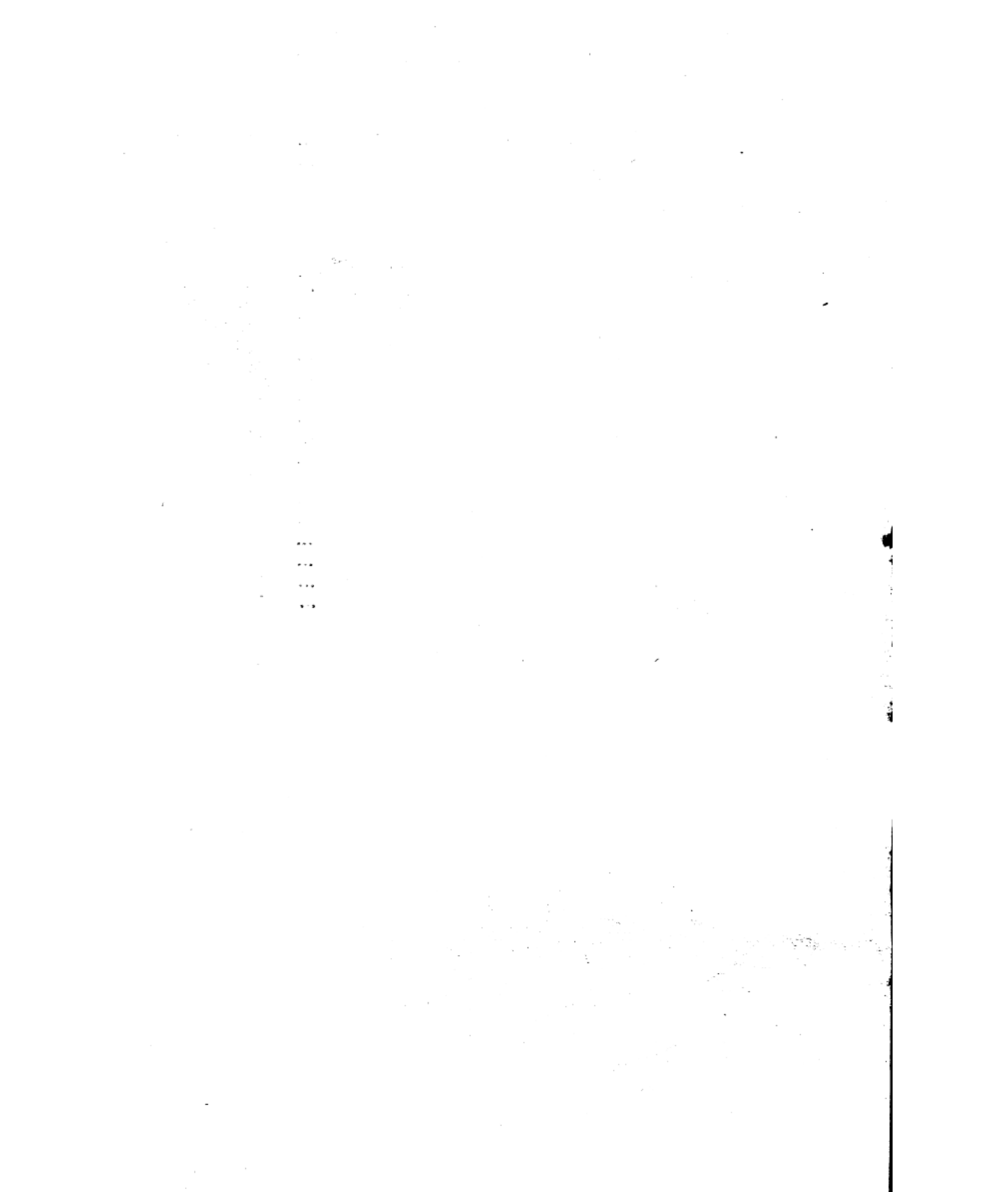
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BOOK VIII

CHAPTER I

THE STORY OF THE MANVANTARAS

The King said : ' I have heard you relate at length, O Guru, the history of the line of Svāyambhuva Manu, by alliance with which the Patriarchs raised large families. Be pleased to tell me now of the other Manus. Tell us, O Brahman, of those Manvantaras which witnessed the births and exploits of the Lord Vishnu, the All-Highest, which the learned have celebrated. Tell us of what the exalted Lord, the Protector of the worlds, did in the various Manvantaras that are past, what He does now, and what He will do in the Manvantaras to come ' (1-3).

The sage replied : In the present Kalpa, the ages of six Manus, Svāyambhuva and others, have passed away. I have told you already of the first of them (Svāyambhuva), in which the gods and other creatures were created. You remember that the Lord was incarnate as the sons of Ākūti and Devahūti, the daughters of that Manu, for the purpose of propagating Dharma and Jñāna. I have already told you of the exalted Lord Kapila's doings. I shall now speak of what the blessed Lord Yajna did, O foremost of the Kurus. The Lord Manu, the consort of Śatarūpā, disgusted with the pleasures of life, gave up the rulership of the kingdom and entered the penitential woods along with his wife to practise austerities. Having practised the most rigorous austerities on the banks of the Sunandā for a hundred years, standing on one foot, he gave utterance to the following, as if he were recollecting it, O scion of the Bharatas. Manu said : ' He, because of Whom the universe (the body, the faculties, and so on) is conscious, while the universe does not make Him conscious, and Who is awake when the universe sleeps—Him the universe does not know, though He knows it ! Every-

thing in the world, moving and non-moving, is pervaded by the Ātman (the Supreme Lord); therefore enjoy what He grants you, and do not covet others' possessions. Worship Him, 'the shining Bird with the beautiful wings, that soars aloft', the Inner Ruler of all creatures, the Seer Whom the eye does not see, but Whose perception is unfailing. He, who has neither beginning, nor end, nor middle; Who looks on nothing as His own or as alien to Him, while there is nothing outside or inside Him; from Whom the universe derives all these features (such as being without beginning or end), He Himself standing forth as the universe—He is the Para Brahma, the Supreme Reality. Though He has the universe for His body and is known by many names, He, the Supreme Lord, knows no birth. He is the One Reality, self-luminous, ancient and immutable. He contrives the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe by His own power of Māyā. But He Himself remains wholly free from activity, exorcising Māyā by the light of Consciousness. So the sages too start with *karma*, so that they may be freed from its thrall (that is, by winning liberation). Most men who do works in this spirit are freed from the bondage of *karma*. The exalted Lord, Who is supreme over all, does act, but He is not attached to the fruits of action; He finds all satisfaction in the Bliss of the Self. And those who follow in His footsteps never come to grief. I take refuge in Him, Who, studiously playing His part in His freely willed incarnations, is engaged in activity in order to instruct all men by His example and thus promote Dharma in this world. But He does this without egoism or desire, and under no compulsion from another, since He is all wisdom and perfection, and master of Himself.' (4-16).

Sri Suka said: On seeing him who, though still in a state of deep abstraction, was uttering the secret teaching that formed part of the Vedic Samhita, the Asuras and the Rākshasas, goaded by hunger, rushed upon him, intending to devour him. Knowing what they had in mind, Yajna, the omnipresent Hari, slew them with the aid of His own sons, the gods known as 'Yāmas', and Himself ruled in heaven (as Indra) (17-18).

The second Manu, Svārochisha, was born as the son of the fire-god. Dyumān, Sushenā, and Rochishmān were the chief among his sons. In that Manvantara, Rochana was the Indra, the Tushitas were the gods, and Ūrja, Stambha and others were the seven seers, expounders of the Veda. The sage Vedaśiras had a wife whose name was Tushitā. Of her he had a son, the Lord who was known to fame as Vibhu. Eighty-eight thousand sages, who were well disciplined, followed in His footsteps, being like Him celibates from childhood (19-22).

The third Manu was Uttama, the son of Priyavrata, whose sons were Pāvana, Sanjaya, Yajñahotra and the rest, O King. The seven sons of Vasishtha, Pramada and others, were the seers of that Manvantara; the gods were the Satyas, the Vedaśrutās, and the Bhadrās, and Satyajit was the Indra. To Dharma was born of Sūnṛtā a son, the exalted and almighty Lord Vishnu, who was known to fame as Satyasena, along with the gods known as Satyavratas. And He, as the ally of Satyajit, slew the wicked Yakshas and Rākshasas, who told lies of set purpose and were disreputable in their conduct, and the hosts of evil spirits who caused injury to living creatures (23-26).

The fourth Manu was Tāmasa, the brother of Uttama; he had ten sons, Prthu, Khyāti, Nara, Ketu, and so on. The gods were the Satyakas, the Haris and the Veeras, and the Indra was Trisikha. Jyotirdhāmā and others were the seven seers of the Tāmasa Manvantara. There were other gods, too, the Vaidhṛtas, sons of Vidhṛti, O King; they, by their own intellectual power, grasped (and brought into use again) the Vedas that had been lost by efflux of time. And in the same Manvantara the exalted Lord, Who came to be known as Hari, was born as the son of Harimedhas and Hariṇi. It was by Him that the great leader of the elephant herd was rescued from the grip of the crocodile (27-30).

Here the King interrupted the sage and told him, 'O son of Bādarāyaṇa, I am eager to hear how Hari liberated the lordly tusker from the grip of the crocodile. Every story in which the praises of the illustrious Lord Hari are sung, is supremely sacred, and is conducive to

the attainment of all happiness and welfare and all that is auspicious' (31-32).

The Sūta said : Thus requested by Parīkṣhit, who had launched on his fast unto death, to expatiate on the exploits of the Lord, the son of Bādarāyaṇa was pleased, O Brahmanas. And he praised the King and gladly began the following tale amidst the assembly of the sages who were listening to his recital (33).

CHAPTER II

THE ELEPHANT AND THE CROCODILE

Śrī Śuka said : There is a great and splendid mountain called Trikūta, O King, encircled by the milky ocean. It is ten thousand *yojanas* high, and has a diameter of the same length. It shines with its three peaks of silver, iron and gold, lighting up the sea, the four quarters and the sky. And it charms the eye with its other peaks rich in varied mineral ores and precious stones, its thickets of trees and vines and the numerous cataracts that noisily tumble down its sides. The earth around it at the base, being washed on all sides by the tides of the milky sea, was dark with a profusion of green stones and emeralds. Its caves were frequented by Siddhas, Chāraṇas, Gandharvas, Vidyādhara, the great Uragas, Kinnaras and Apsarases, who loved to sport therein. When its caves resounded with the sublime strains of music, the lions, who could not bear to hear it, imagining that it was caused by other lions, vaunted their prowess by roaring in reply. The mountain afforded perpetual delight, with its valleys teeming with wild life of every kind, and sweet-throated birds thronging the trees in the pleasure-gardens of the gods which were to be found there. There were lakes and streams of pellucid water and sand-banks whose sands glittered like gems ; and the breezes carried drops of water charged with the perfume of the bodies of bathing damsels from heaven. (1-8).

In that valley of the mountain was the pleasure-garden of the great god Varuṇa, named Rūmān, the playground of the celestial nymphs, adorned in every part of it with the celestial trees that were constantly in fruit and flower.

It was fringed with *mandāra* and *pārijāta*, *pātala*, *asoka*, *champa*, mango, *priyāla* and jack-fruit, *āmra*, hog-plum, areca-nut, cocoanut, date, citron, mahua, *sāl* and palm, *tamāla*, *asana*, *arjuna*, *arishta*, fig, sacred fig, banyan, *palāśa* and sandal, the short-leaved neem, *kovidāra*, *sarala*, *devadāru*, grape, sugar-cane, plantain, rose-apple, jujube, *rudrāksha*, the yellow myrabilan, *ām̐la*, bel, wood-apple, lemon, the marking nut, and so on. In that garden was a great lake with shining golden lotuses, and a vast wealth of *kumuda* and *kalhāra* and *śatapatra*. It ever resounded with the hum of drunken bees and the warbling of birds. It was crowded with swans, *kārandavas*, *chakravākas* and *sāras* cranes. The crooning of water-fowl, paddy-bird and gallinule was always heard there, and on the water lay the lotus pollen shaken by the movements of fish and turtle. *Kadamba*, *nala*, *neepa*, reed-clumps of many varieties, grew all round it. And it was extraordinarily beautiful with *kumuda* and amaranth, *asoka*, *śirīsha*, *kutaja* and *ingudi*, *kubjaka*, *svarna-yūthi*, many varieties of rose-apple and *punnāga*, and jasmine, *śatapatra*, *mādhavī* and *jālaka*, as well as other trees that grew on the banks and were always in fruit and flower (9-19).

Once there came to the lake the leader of a great elephant herd, which roamed in this mountain forest, accompanied by the bulls and cows. They came crashing through thickets of bamboo, hollow and solid, and cane, with their profusion of thorns, and huge forest trees. If lions, giant tuskers, tigers and other beasts of prey, and rhinoceroses and the like, and the great serpents, the white and black-faced monkeys, *chamaris* and *śarabhas* got wind of his presence anywhere in the vicinity, they fled thence in abject terror; while the lesser beasts, wolves, boars, buffaloes, bears, porcupines, the 'cow-tail', jackals and apes, deer, rabbits and so on, avoided his track and lived in that forest unmolested, by his grace. Suffering from the heat of summer, and exuding ichor, he came there surrounded by other elephants and cows and followed by baby-elephants. He shook the mountain by reason of his weight as he moved, and he was followed by swarms of black bees, eager to feed on the ichor. Scenting from afar the breeze from

the lake which carried the fragrance of lotus pollen, the tusker, his eyes whirling in *mast*, hastened to it along with his herd of elephants tormented by thirst. Plunging in its nectar-like pellucid water, laden with the scent of golden lotus and lily, and refreshing himself by spouting water, drawn by his own trunk, all over his body, he drank to his heart's content. Bathing his cows and young with loving solicitude with the cool water lifted by his trunk, and making them drink it, like any householder, the proud animal, caught in the toils of the Lord's Māyā, and helpless, d'd not see the great peril he was in (20-26).

A giant crocodile, far stronger than he, caught him by the leg in the water in a great fury, instigated by fate, O King. The tusker, thus involved in misfortune, as the result of past *karma*, strove his best to release himself, using his immense strength. When they found the leader of the herd being swiftly dragged by one of superior strength, the helpless cows trumpeted in their grief, while the males, his followers, were unable to get him out. As the lordly elephant and the crocodile thus battled, the one dragging the other down one moment, and being dragged out by him the next, a thousand years passed, O King. Finding them both still alive, the gods marvelled. The mental vigour, strength and energy of the great elephant were exhausted by this long battling in the water, and he was sinking, while the reverse was happening to the amphibian. When the great elephant, with its huge body, was helpless and unable to release himself, and he realized that his life was in peril in this encounter, the work of fate, he pondered long and came to this conclusion. 'These elephants, my kin, cannot take this affliction away from me, much less the cows. But, though caught in the noose of the Dispenser of all destinies in the form of this crocodile, I shall place myself in the hands of the Supreme Lord, the Last Refuge. I seek the protection of Him, the Great Unknown, the Supreme Lord Who saves from death, that terrible serpent which pounces on his prey, the creature who in his terror beseeches His mercy; it is from fear of Him that Death himself is ever running about, doing his work' (27-33).

CHAPTER III

THE LORD FREES THE TUSKER

Sri Suka said : Having thus resolved, he steadied his mind, turning it inward by an effort of will, and recited the great hymn that he had learnt in his previous life. The great tusker said : 'Om ; I mentally salute Him, the exalted Lord, from Whom derives the consciousness which informs the body and the like ; Who has entered as the cause the bodies of all creatures in the form of Prakṛti and Puruṣa ; and Who is, too, the Transcendent Lord. I take refuge in Him, the Self-existent in Whom the universe appears, being of His very substance, and created by and through Himself ; Who Himself stands forth as the universe, while He is different from both it, the effect, and the (proximate) cause of its coming into being. May He, Who is self-luminous, and to Whom all the lesser lights that reveal the world owe their power ; on Whom the universe is projected by His own Māyā, and is sometimes manifest, while at other times it is withdrawn from view ; Who with His unimpeded vision is the Witness of both states (cause and effect)—may He vouchsafe His protection to me ! May He, the all-pervading Lord, Whose effulgence transcends the impassable and infinite darkness that prevails when time has destroyed all the worlds, their rulers, and all the causes that had brought them into existence, protect me ! When neither the gods nor the sages know His essential being, how could common creatures know or describe Him, Whose ways are past understanding, any more than the spectator can penetrate behind the disguise of a play-actor, who plays different roles ? May He be my refuge, inspired by the longing to know Whom, the ever-auspicious Lord, as He truly is, contemplatives of saintly disposition, who are the well-wishers of all beings and who look upon them as no different from their own selves, ceaselessly practise in the woods extraordinary vows (such as celibacy), renouncing all attachments. Salutations to Him Who knows neither birth nor activity, Who is devoid of name and form, of merit and demerit, but Who nevertheless assumes all these attributes by His own Power of Māyā, at the

appropriate time, for the destruction and creation of the worlds. Salutations to Him, the Brahma without form, as well as the Supreme Lord of the infinite potencies, Who does marvellous deeds. I make my salutations to Him, the Self-luminous, the Witness and Paramātmān (Inner Ruler) Who is beyond the reach of words, of the mind and its modes, and Who, yet, may be attained by men of discrimination with pure hearts through renunciation ; Who is the Dispenser of liberation and Himself constitutes the experience of the bliss of Moksha. Salutations to Him, Who manifests Himself as tranquil, or terrible, or sunk in torpor, at different times, by adopting the characteristics of *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas* ; Who is free from attributes and Who knows no diversity ; Who is at the same time of *jnāna* all compact. Salutations to Thee, the Knower-of-the-field, the Overlord and Witness ; to Thee That are Perfection Itself and the Origin of the Knower-of-the-field and of Prakṛti alike. Salutations to Thee, the Witness of the objects of all organs ; That art indicated by the activities of the organs, being revealed by Thy reflection in the shadow-like illusive world of objects. Salutations again and yet again to Thee That art all the causes that have fashioned the world, Thyself uncaused, and marvellous Cause ; That art the ocean in which all the Āgamas and all the Vedas meet ; That art Liberation, and the Home of the good. I make my prostrations to Him Who is the fire of consciousness hidden in the fire-stick of the *guṇas* ; Whose mind manifests itself in outward activity when the equilibrium of the *guṇas* is disturbed ; Who reveals Himself to those who, being engaged in the constant contemplation of the Self, have discarded rule and prohibition (1-16).

‘ I salute Thee That freest from the bonds of nescience ignorant creatures like me, who put themselves confidingly into Thy hands ; That art ever free and, because of Thy infinite compassion, ever active in Thy benevolence. I salute Thee, all-powerful, infinite Lord That appearest, with a fraction of Thyself, in all minds as the Power of *jnāna* (the Inner Ruler). I offer my salutations to Him, the exalted Lord paramount over all powers, Who is of the essence of *jnāna* ; Who cannot

be attained by men who are attached to the body, to their progeny, friends, house, wealth and dependants ; Who is wholly free from attachment to the objects of the senses, and is constantly contemplated in their hearts by those who have shed their attachment to the body and other possessions. May He of the boundless compassion, by worshipping Whom those who are desirous of Dharma, Artha, Kāma or Moksha, not only obtain what they pray for but also all other blessings, and a body that knows no decay, bring me release. I extol the Lord, of Whom His devotees, who have given Him their exclusive devotion and who have surrendered themselves into His hands, ask nothing, plunging into the ocean of bliss as they sing His marvellous tale, which brings one all that is auspicious. I sing of the Lord Who knows no wane, the All-pervading and Transcendent One, Who is supreme over all Powers, Whom no one may see but Who may be attained through the Yoga of the Self, Who is beyond the reach of the senses, like the atom or like something which is infinitely far away ; Who is infinite, the First Cause and Perfection itself. May He Who, with an inconsiderable fraction of Himself, has created beings with a multitude of names and forms, Brahmā and the other gods, the Vedas and all the worlds, moving and stationary ; from Whom proceeds, as sparks from the fire and rays from the sun incessantly issue and disappear, the eternal flux, the product of the *guṇas*—the intellect, the mind, the organs and the bodies produced in unending succession ; Who is neither god nor Asura, neither man nor one of the lower creation, neither male, female, neuter or other creature, neither *guṇa* nor *karma*, neither cause nor effect ; Who alone remains when all else has been negated, but Who manifests Himself as all that is—may He appear here and now ! (17-24).

‘I do not wish merely to go on living ; for what use in this world is this elephant body, pervaded within and without by ignorance ? What I want is the rending of the veil, which hides the light of the *Ātman* and which is not removed by the passage of time. Such as I am, I make my prostrations to Him, Who is the Creator of the world, and the world itself, and yet different from it ;

Who utilizes the world as the instrument of His purposes; Who is the Soul of the universe, and Who knows no birth; Who is the Brahma, the Supreme Goal. I salute Him, the Lord of yoga, Whom the yogis, whose *karmas* have been burnt up by their steady devotion, see manifested in their hearts purified by yoga. Salutations, and again salutations, to Thee That art possessed of the three powers¹ of irresistible speed, and That art apparent as the objects of all the senses; to Thee that succourest those who seek refuge in Thee and art of limitless puissance; Whose ways will never be discovered by men whose senses have not been disciplined. I throw myself on the protection of the Lord of the transcendent glory, Whom men do not know though He is their very Soul, because He is hidden from their view by the veil of egoism, which His *Māyā* has drawn over it' (25-29).

Srī Suka said: When Brahmā and the other gods did not go to the help of the great tusker, who thus called upon the Supreme Lord uncircumscribed by any particular form, because they egoistically identified themselves with their different forms, the Lord Who bore the name of Hari, Who is the Soul of the universe and is Himself all the gods, presented Himself before him. Seeing him in sore distress and hearing his hymn of praise, the Lord, in Whom is the universe, had hastened to the place where the great tusker was, swiftly borne by Garuda, who is of the substance of the Veda, with the gods attending upon Him and singing His praises. When he, in this extremity, held by the firm grip of the crocodile in the water, saw Hari in the sky mounted on Garuda and with the discus raised in His hand, he saluted the Lord with the uplifted trunk, offering a lotus and crying with great difficulty, 'Salutations to Thee, O Narayana, exalted Lord and Father of all the Worlds.' The Lord Who knows no birth, seeing the agony he was in, swiftly got off His mount, and moved by compassion, pulled him instantly out the lake along with the crocodile. And before the eyes of the assembled gods, Hari freed the great tusker from the crocodile's grip, severing the latter's jaw with the discus (30-33).

¹ The three *gunas*.

CHAPTER IV

TUSKER AND CROCODILE REDEEMED

Sri Suka said : Thereupon Brahmā, Īśa and other gods, sages and Gandharvas, let fall showers of flowers as they praised that exploit of Hari's. The celestial kettle-drums struck up, the Gandharvas danced and sang, the sages, Chāraṇas and Siddhas extolled the All-Highest. The crocodile was none other than Hūhū, the great Gandharva, who was now freed from the curse of Devala and was once more endowed with a marvellous form. Bowing low before the illustrious and imperishable Overlord of the universe, the Home of Glory, Whose virtues deserve to be proclaimed, and Whose story is holy, he sang His praises. Freed from sin by the compassion of the supreme Lord, he went round him in all reverence, and making his prostrations to Him, went to his own world, as all present looked on (1-5).

The great tusker was freed by the touch of the Lord from the bondage of ignorance, and his body was transformed into the likeness of the Lord; he was clad in yellow silks, and he had four arms. In his former life he had been a King of the Pāndya region, and foremost among the inhabitants of the Dravida country. He was known to fame as Indradyumna, and was devoted to the worship of Vishnu. Once he, who led an ascetic life, wearing matted hair, in his hermitage on the Malaya mountain, was engaged in the worship of Achyuta, the supreme Lord Hari, after his bath, with his senses under control, and observing the vow of silence at the time of worship. By chance the famous sage (Agastya) came there with his disciples. When he remained silent, seated in a retired spot, and did not offer him the customary courtesies, the sage was angry with him. And he cursed him saying, 'This is an evil and wicked creature, with an uninstructed mind. He is guilty of insulting Brahmanas, and immovable in his pride like the elephant, and so let him become one and fall into the darkness of ignorance' (6-10).

Sri Suka said : Having thus cursed him, the blessed Agastya went away with his followers, O King. The royal sage Indradyumna saw the hand of destiny in it.

He was reborn as an elephant—a birth which was not conducive to the remembrance of his own true Self—but even in that life as an elephant he retained recollection of his past by virtue of his worship of Hari. Having freed the leader of the elephant herd and conferred upon him the status of His own personal attendant, the Lord returned to His own marvellous Abode, riding on Garudā, and taking Indradyumna with Him, as the Gandharvas, the Siddhas and the gods sang His exploits. The story of the liberation of the king of the elephants, which I have related to you, great King, and which speaks the glory of Sṛī Kṛishna, has the virtue of bestowing on the hearer heaven and fame, destroying the taint of Kali and saving him from bad dreams. So those of the twice-born who are intent on their own welfare recite this in the morning as soon as they get up and purify themselves, in order to be free from such dreams and other like evils. Hari, the all-pervading Lord, and Inner Ruler of all creatures, spoke thus to the great tusker, being pleased with him, O first of the Kurus, as all the world listened (13-16).

The Lord said, 'Release from the consequences of all sins will be the meed of those who get up in the last watch of the night and recollect, with a diligent and concentrated mind, Me and those in whom are to be found My glorious attributes, such as yourself, this lake, this mountain, with its caves and forests, the thickets of cane and bamboo, hollow and solid, the celestial trees, and these peaks; the abodes of Myself, Brahmā and Śiva, the Milky Ocean and the shining White Island, My favourite homes, My Śrīvatsa mark and Kausthubha jewel, My garland, and the mace, Kaumodikī, (My discus) Sudarāṣana, (My conch) Pāṇchajanya, the King of the birds (with the beautiful wings), Śeṣha, My ineffable fraction, the Goddess Śrī, Who abides with Me; Brahmā, the sage Nārada, Bhava (Śiva) and Prahrāda; the exploits, recollection of which confers endless merit, done by Me in My incarnations as fish, tortoise, boar, and so on; the sun, the moon, fire, the Praṇava, Truth, Māyā, the cows, the Brahmanas, the unwaning Dharma (of devotion), the daughters of Dakṣha, who were the wives of Dharma, and the wives of Soma and Kāśyapa;

the Gangā, the Sarasvatī, the Nandā, and the Kālindī ; the white elephant (Airāvata) ; Dhruva ; the seven Brahmana sages, and those men to speak whose name is holy. To those who, waking up at the end of the night, praise Me, reciting this, I bring enlightenment when their life comes to an end' (17-25).

Srī Suka said : Having thus instructed him, Hrshi-keśa sounded His great conch, filling the hosts of the gods with gladness, and mounted on the back of the King of the birds (26).

CHAPTER V

BRAHMĀ PRAYS FOR HELP TO THE GODS

Srī Suka said : I have told you, O King, of Hari's holy exploit in freeing the great tusker, to hear of which is to be rid of one's sins. Now listen, while I tell you of the Raivata Manvantara. The fifth Manu was Raivata, the brother of Tāmasa. Bali, Vindhya and others were his sons ; of them the eldest was Arjuna. The Indra of that Manvantara was Vibhu, the gods were Bhūtaraya and others. The Brahmana sages were Hiranyaromā, Vedaśiras, Ūrdhva-bāhu, and the rest. Vikunthā was the wife of Subhra ; to them was born, along with others called Vaikunthas, who were great gods, the Lord of Vaikuntha, Who was incarnate with a fraction of Himself. It was He who created Vaikuntha, that world to which all others pay homage, in order to please the Goddess Ramā, who wanted it. I have already told you of His greatness, His virtues and His measureless magnificence. The man who sought to describe Vishnu's virtues would be engaged on a task like counting the particles of dust on earth (1-8).

The sixth Manu, known as Chākshusha Manu, was the son of Chakshus. Pūru, Pūrusha, Sudyumna and others were his sons. The Indra then was Mantradruma, the gods were the groups known as the Āpyas, and so on, the sages were Havishmān, Veeraka and the rest, O King. In that Manvantara too the Lord of the universe was born as the son of Vairāja and Sambhūti, with a fraction of Himself, and was called Ajita. He churned the Milky Ocean, and got the gods nectar. And He bore

on his back, taking the form of a tortoise, the Mandara mountain with which He did the churning, when it began lurching in the water (7-10).

The King asked, 'How was the Milky Ocean churned by the Lord, O Brahman, and for what purpose? Why did He carry the mountain on His back, taking the form of that amphibian creature? How did the gods obtain nectar, and what else happened? Be pleased to tell me of this marvellous exploit of the Lord. My heart, scorched by my long suffering, is not satisfied with what it has heard; it longs to hear more and more of the glories of the Lord, the Protector of His devotees, with which you have been rejoicing our hearts' (11-13).

The Sūta said: Thus deferentially requested, the blessed sage, the son of Dvaipāyana, welcomed his questions, O Brahmanas, and he began expatiating on the greatness of the Lord. Śrī Suka said: When the gods, attacked by the Asuras in battle with sharp weapons, were slain in large numbers and fell and did not rise up again, and Indra, and the three worlds along with him, were denuded of prosperity because of Durvāsa's curse, sacrifices and other such rites fell into desuetude. Mahendra, Varuṇa and the other gods, taking note of this state of affairs, debated among themselves, but could come to no decisive conclusion, and so they all went to the assembly of Brahmā on the summit of Mount Meru, and prostrating themselves before the Supreme Creator, they respectfully told him of all that had happened (14-18).

Seeing that Indra, Vāyu, and other gods were weak and lacklustre and the worlds were beset by misfortune, while the reverse was the case with the Asuras, the great god meditated on the Supreme Lord with a collected mind; and then, with a beaming face, he, their overlord, told the gods, 'The Lord Bhava and I, and you, the gods, the Asuras and the rest, men, the lower beings, the trees, the creatures bred in sweat, and so on, who are all the creation of those (the Patriarchs) who are fractions of an *aṁśa* (Brahmā) of the Lord's first incarnation as Puruṣa—we shall all throw ourselves on the mercy of Him, the Lord Who knows no wane. There is none whom He must slay, and none whom He must

protect ; there is no side which He is bound to support, even as there is none which He must repudiate. And yet He assumes different forms at the appropriate time, constituted of *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*, when the work of creation, preservation or destruction of the worlds needs it. Now He is engaged in protecting the universe, utilizing the quality of *sattva* for the well-being of all creatures. Therefore let us seek shelter with Him, the Ruler of the worlds, Who, loving the gods and looking upon us as His own folk, will secure our welfare' (19-23).

Srī Suka went on : Having thus assured the gods, the Creator went with them to the abode of the exalted Lord Ajita, which lies beyond the darkness, O subduer of the foe. And there, with his senses under control, he extolled in the words of Vedic hymns the Lord, Whose essence was not known to him by personal experience, but of Whom he knew through the Śāstra, O all-powerful one. Brahmā said : ' We make our salutations to Thee, the Highest of the gods, that Goal which is most to be desired, being the Truth ; Which is changeless and knows neither beginning nor end. Thou dwellest in the heart's cave and art unconditioned by limiting adjuncts. Thou bafflest the mind, being swifter than the mind, and Thou canst not be compassed by speech. We take refuge in Him Who is incarnate in three *yugas* ; Who knows the vital airs, the mind, the intellect and the ego ; Who appears as the senses and their objects ; Who is free from ignorance and unburdened by the body ; Who is imperishable and all-pervading like *ākāśa* ; but in Whom there is neither *vidyā* nor *avidyā*, the two adjuncts of the *jīva*. I put myself in the hands of Him Who is Truth, and the Axle on which moves the revolving wheel of the *jīva*'s transmigratory existence ; that wheel which is speeded by *Māyā*, and is predominantly constituted of the mind, and which has fifteen spokes, three naves and eight fellys, and is as fleeting as lightning. We make our salutations to That (Brahma) Who is Pure *Ĵnāna* in essence and beyond the reach of Prakṛti ; Who is unmanifest, undifferentiated, and unlimited ; Who is the inseparable companion of the *jīva*, and Whom men of wisdom propitiate by yoga.

We make our salutations to Him, the Lord Who is paramount over all of us, Whose Māyā is insuperable and takes in all beings and keeps them ignorant of the truth of the Self; Who, however, has sovereign control over His power of Māyā and its *guṇas*, and deals with all creatures equally. When we (the gods), who were created by Him out of *sattva*, the form that He loves most, and the sages, cannot claim to know His unconditioned nature, though it shows Itself within and without as Existence and Consciousness, how can others, such as the Asuras, who are constituted predominantly of *rajas* and *tamas*, hope to know it? May He, the Lord supremely great, Who has for feet the earth created by Himself, on which live the four classes of creatures, but Who is ever free and Who commands all the attributes of Omnipotence, Who is in fact none other than the Brahma, be gracious to us! May that Lord be gracious to us, Whose virility constitutes the waters with their tremendous potency, from which the worlds and their Guardians are born and by which they exist and are nourished! May that Lord vouchsafe us His grace, Who, as the Vedas say, has for His mind the moon, which is the food of the gods and (thus) their strength and life, the protector of the trees and the sustainer of all creatures; Who has for His mouth fire, which is the source¹ of wealth, and the means whereby one is enabled to perform the rites enjoined by the ritual sections of the Veda, and which cooks in the bowels the food that is acceptable to the body (and boils the water of the ocean); Whose eye is the sun, the deity of the celestial path, the substance of the Vedas, the vehicle for meditation on the Brahma, and the gateway to liberation; Who is, too, immortality as well as death. May that Omnipotent Lord Who is none other than the Brahma be gracious to us—He from Whose life-breath originated Vāyu, which is the life-breath in all beings, the source of their mental vigour, bodily strength and vital energy, and which we follow as feudatories obey their emperor; from Whose ears originated the quarters; from Whose heart were derived the spaces within the body; from Whose navel came *ākāśa* wherein were located the five-

¹ 'Conveyor of oblations' (R.).

fold vital airs, the faculties of sensation and action, the mind, the other vital airs and the body; of Whose strength was born Mahendra, as the gods were born of His grace, Girīśa of His wrath, Virinchi of His intellect, the Vedic metres and the sages, of the spaces within Him, and Prajāpati, of His organ of generation. May the Lord be gracious to us—He from Whose bosom came the Goddess Śrī, as from His shadow emerged the manes, from His breast Dharma, from His back Adharma, from His head heaven, and from His play the Apsarases. May the Lord Omnipotent, the Brahmā, be gracious to us—He from Whose mouth came the Brahmana and the Veda, which speaks of what is beyond the reach of the senses, as from His arms sprang the Kshatriya and his strength, from His thighs¹ the Vaiśya and his skill, and from His feet the Sūdra and the service which he renders outside the domain of the Veda. May the Lord vouchsafe us His grace—He from whose lower lip originated covetousness, as from His upper lip came love, from His nose radiance, from His touch animal-like lust, from His eyebrows death, and from His eyelashes time. May that Omnipotent Lord, of Whom the learned say that the elements, time, *karma*, *guṇas* and the material world, all of which baffle the understanding, but which men of enlightenment dismiss² as unreal, are the creation of His Yoga-Māyā—may that Lord of the mighty attributes be gracious to us! (24-43).

‘We make our salutations to Him in Whom the powers (*sattva* and the rest) are quiescent; Whose mind, filled with the bliss of the Self, is not attached through its activities to the objects of the senses, the product of Māyā, behaving as He does like the air in His cosmic play. Show Thyself to us, who have taken refuge in Thee and are eager to see Thy smiling lotus face so plainly that our senses may apprehend Thee. For, from time to time, Thou, O Lord, performest exploits that are impossible to us, taking different forms of Thy free will. The works of mortals, distraught by the clamour of desires, involve endless hardship, and are of little value or totally futile; but that does not happen

¹ (v. r. preferred by S. and R.) ‘from His thighs the Vaiśya, and from His feet the Sūdra’ ² (v. r.) ‘know to be the work of Māyā’

when they are dedicated to Thee. Nothing a man does, however trivial or lacking in substance it may be, is wasted if it is offered to the Supreme Lord ; is not the Lord the very Self of the doer, his Beloved and Well-wisher ? Just as the watering of a tree at the roots benefits its trunk and branches, so does the worship of Vishnu subserve the interests of all creatures and of oneself. Our salutations to Thee, the Infinite Lord, Whose thoughts and deeds are inscrutable, Who art unconditioned by the *guṇas* which Thou rulest, and Who art now established in *sattva* (44-50).

CHAPTER VI

CHURNING THE OCEAN FOR NECTAR

Srī Suka said : When the gods thus extolled Him, the exalted and paramount Lord Hari appeared before them, O King, shining like a thousand suns. The gods, their eyes blinded by that dazzling vision, could see neither the sky nor the four quarters, neither the earth nor themselves ; how then could they see the Lord That is everywhere ? Beside Sarva, only the blessed Lord Virinchi saw that glorious figure, of a crystal purity, dark-green as the emerald, with eyes that were reddish like the inside of the lotus. Clad in shimmering silks that looked like molten gold, He was gracious and charming in every limb, and the face was lovely with its enchanting eyebrows. He was adorned with a great crown set with big brilliants, and with armlets ; and the charm of the lotus face was enhanced by the cheeks lit up by the glittering ear-pendants. He shone with the lustre of girdle and bracelets, necklace and anklets. He was adorned with the Kausthubha jewel and bore Lakshmi (the Srivatsa mark) on His breast. He wore the garland of sylvan flowers, and was waited upon by the weapons that were uniquely His, such as the Sudarśana, taking human forms for the nonce. The foremost of the gods (Brahmā), along with Sarva, and with all the celestials, who prostrated themselves on the ground before Him, extolled the Transcendent Lord (1-7).

Brahmā said : ' Salutations and again salutations to Thee, the Lord supremely great, That knowest neither

birth nor duration nor extinction ; That art devoid of the *guṇas* of Prakṛti, being the Bliss of *moksha*, vast as the ocean ; That art subtler than the subtlest and measureless in Thy magnificence. This form of Thine, O Supreme Lord and Creator of the worlds, should be worshipped by those who want all that is good, according to the modes prescribed in the Vedas and the Āgamas. I see in this form of Thine that contains the universe, all the three worlds along with ourselves. In Thee That art independent, this universe is contained throughout its existence, in the beginning, the middle and the end. And Thou art Thyself the universe, its beginning, middle and end, as the clay is the pot ; for Thou art higher than Pradhāna, which is higher than all else. Thou, having created the universe by the power of Māyā, which is Thine own and dependent on Thee, hast entered it. Men of discrimination, who have controlled their minds and are learned in the Sāstras, perceive with their minds that Thou remainest unaffected by the *guṇas* when these undergo change. As men obtain fire from wood, milk from cows, food and water from the earth, and the means of livelihood from various enterprises, adopting appropriate expedients, so do men of wisdom discover Thee by their intelligence and proclaim Thee. Having seen Thee, for a vision of Whom we have long yearned, appear before us in all Thy splendour, we rejoice supremely, O Lord of the lotus navel, like elephants scorched by the forest fire, when they find the water of the Gangā. Thou must do what we, the Guardians of the worlds, have come to beseech of Thee. What is there in the world that is unknown to Thee, and of which we need tell Thee, O Lord, Ruler and Witness in all that lives ? Myself, Gītrā, the gods, Dakṣha and all these others, appear separated from Thee, as sparks are from the parent fire. How can we know what is good for us ? Thou shouldst Thyself advise us, the gods and the Brahmanas, as to what we should do to secure our happiness' (8-15).

Sri Suka said : Being thus extolled by Virinchi and others, and knowing what they had in mind, the Lord spoke to them in a voice deep as thunder, as they stood before Him with folded hands and their senses

under control. While He, the Lord Paramount over the gods, could have achieved the purpose of the gods by His unaided effort, He wished to divert Himself in their company with such pastimes as the churning of the ocean, and therefore addressed them thus (16-17).

The Lord said : ' Ah, Brahmā, and you, Sambhu and others here, gods and celestials, listen carefully, while I tell you how you may compass your own good. Go and be friends with the Dānavas and the sons of Diti, whom fortune favours now, until such time as it turns in your favour. Even enemies have to be cultivated when the importance of one's purpose requires it. When your object has been gained, you can deal with them as the serpent does with the mouse. Launch efforts without delay for procuring nectar, by drinking which any creature, even if he might be caught in the jaws of death, would become immortal. Throwing into the milky sea every kind of shrub, grass, creeper and medicinal plant, and using the Mandara mountain as the churning rod and Vāsuki as the churning rope, you should churn the sea with My help, without giving way to sloth. The Daityas will have nothing but their labour for their pains, you will be enjoying the fruit. Agree to whatever the Asuras propose, O gods. All objectives may be gained by conciliatory methods, as they cannot be by the display of anger or agitation. You should not be afraid of the Kālakūta poison that will be thrown up by the sea. And you should not exhibit covetousness or anger or eagerness to snatch at anything that might come up ' (18-25).

Sri Suka said : Having thus instructed the gods, the exalted Lord Purushottama, Who comes and goes of His free will, vanished from view, O King. The Grandsire and Bhava returned to their abodes, having made their obeisance to the Lord, and the gods repaired to Bali. The ruler of the Daityas, who was worthy of all praise, seeing that the chiefs of his army were greatly excited at the sight of the enemy, though the latter came unprepared to fight, restrained them. He knew when it would be proper to conciliate the enemy and when to quarrel. The gods waited upon the son of Virochana, who having conquered his enemies enjoyed all pros-

perity, and sat surrounded by the chiefs of the Asura army, who watched over him. The sagacious Mahendra addressed him in pleasing words, and having gained his confidence, told him all that he had been instructed by Purushottama to say. What he said appealed to the Daitya (ruler) and the other Asura chiefs who were present, such as Sambara and Arishtanemi, and the inhabitants of Tripura (26-31).

Then the gods and the Asuras, having become friends and entered into a compact, made strenuous efforts to secure nectar, O subduer of the foe. With their arms stout as iron clubs, those proud and capable beings tore up the Mandara mountain by the roots, by sheer strength, and with tremendous shouts carried it towards the sea. But, exhausted when they had gone a long way by the heavy burden they had to carry, Śakra, the son of Virochana, and others helplessly let it fall down on the way, unable to take it any further. And the golden mountain fell, pulverizing many gods and Dānavas by its stupendous weight. The exalted Lord Who sports the Garuda flag, knowing that they were broken in spirit even as their arms, thighs and necks were broken, appeared suddenly before them. Seeing that both gods and Dānavas had been crushed by the fall of the mountain, he revived the gods by a mere glance and made them whole as before. And playfully lifting up the mountain with one hand on to Garuda's shoulder, He got up on him and went towards the sea, surrounded by the gods and the Asuras. Arrived there, Garuda, King among birds, took down the mountain from his shoulder, and placing it at the water's edge, went away, discharged by Hari (32-39).

CHAPTER VII

ŚIVA SWALLOWS THE HĀLĀHALA POISON

Śrī Suka said: They, the gods and the Asuras, invited Vāsuki, the King of the serpents, to join them, agreeing to share the fruit (nectar) with him. They wound him like a churning rope round the mountain and gladly began their strenuous efforts to win nectar by churning the ocean, O first of the Kurus. Hari first

took hold of the serpent's head, and the gods ranged themselves behind Him ; but the chiefs of the Daityas did not like that act of the Mahāpurusha. ' We, who have learnt the Vedas and are well-versed in the Sāstras and have won renown by our high birth and deeds, shall not touch the serpent's tail, a part of the body which is inauspicious ' : when they, moved by such thoughts, stood stock-still, doing nothing, the Supreme Lord smilingly let go the head and caught hold of the tail, the gods following. Having thus settled among themselves their respective places, the sons of Kāśyapa churned the sea strenuously for the sake of nectar (1-5).

As the sea was being churned, the mountain, being without support, sank down into the waters because of its heaviness, though held by strong hands, O son of the Pāndus. When their efforts were thus frustrated by omnipotent fate, they became despondent, and their faces lost their brightness. Seeing the obstacle interposed by the Lord of Obstacles, the Supreme Lord of the limitless strength and the indefeasible will took the form of a huge and marvellous tortoise, plunged into the water, and held up the mountain. On seeing the great mountain emerging from the water, the gods and the Asuras began churning again, while He, huge as an island-continent, bore the mountain on His back, which covered a hundred thousand *yojanas*. That first of all tortoises, with its measureless puissance, carrying the mountain, which was revolving on its back, moved by the united strength of the arms of the chiefs of the gods and the Asuras, regarded its revolution, my dear, as (welcome) scratching of its back ! Vishnu entered the Asuras with an *āsuric* form and the gods with a celestial form, thus enhancing the power and prowess of both. He entered the King of the serpents with a power that induced insensibility (to pain). The Lord of the thousand arms, standing over the mountain like another huge mountain, held it down with one hand, while Brahmā, Bhava, Indra and others, poised in the air, extolled Him and rained flowers on Him. Their strength augmented by the Supreme Lord's presence above and below, and His entry into them as well as into the mountain and the churning rope (the serpent), they churned

the ocean with drunken fury, the huge mountain throwing into a turmoil its multitudinous crocodile population. The Paulomās, the Kālakeyas, Bali, Ilvala and the other Asuras, their faces parched by the fierce fire and smoke issuing from the numberless eyes and mouths and the breath of the King of the serpents, looked like *sarala* trees blasted by the forest fire. But, while the lustre of the gods too was dimmed by the fire he breathed, and their raiment, priceless wreaths, coats and faces were begrimed with the smoke, they were doused by copious showers let down by clouds that did the Lord's will, and served by the winds that the waves had embraced (6-15).

When no nectar issued from the sea in spite of the churning by the captains of the celestial and Asura hosts, the irresistible Lord Himself took up the churning. Dark-blue as the rain-cloud; clad in yellow silks; wearing the sylvan garland, and ear-pendants that flashed like lightning, His dishevelled locks glistening, His eyes a deep red,—the Lord, Who sustained the mountain even while He plied it, looked like a rival mountain, as He took hold of the serpent with those invincible hands that assure freedom from fear to all the worlds, and churned the ocean (16-17).

From the ocean as it was churned, frightening the fish, and throwing up alligators, snakes and tortoises, its waters violently agitated by shoals of *timi*, sea-elephants, sharks and whales, there first emerged the extremely virulent poison known as Hālāhala. As it swelled and spread up and down and in all directions, unbearable and irresistible in its terrific sweep and speed, all creatures and their rulers were terrified, and finding no other protector, they fled, my dear, for refuge to Sadāsiva. Looking at Him, the first of the gods, Who was established with the goddess on the mountain (Kailāsa) for the welfare of the three worlds, and Who was most dear to the contemplatives, being engaged in austerities for the sake of bringing liberation to them, they made their prostrations to Him, singing hymns of praise (18-20).

The Patriarchs said: 'O God of gods, Almighty Lord, the Soul in all creatures and Protector of them all,

save us, who seek Thy protection from the poison that burns the three worlds. Thou art the one Lord That hast the power to bind and free all the worlds ; therefore men of discrimination worship Thee, the Teacher and Dispeller of the sufferings of those who put themselves into Thy hands. When Thou, O Lord That art all-powerful and all-comprehending, decidest on the creation, preservation or destruction of the universe, using Thy power of Māyā composed of the three *guṇas*, Thou, to Whom enlightenment is innate, takest to Thyself the appropriate name Brahmā, Vishnu or Siva. Thou art the Para Brahmā, the Supreme Mystery, the Creator of the highest and the lowest, and Thou art Thyself manifested as the universe by Thy manifold power, and art its Overlord too. Thou art the source of the Veda ; Thou art the Mahat, and the ego, whose properties are the causes of the vital airs, the organs and the gross elements. Thou art, too, the natural dispositions of all creatures, time, the power of willing, and the Dharma which comprehends Satya and Ṛta. They speak of the Pradhāna possessed of the three *guṇas* as dependent on Thee. They say that fire, the soul of all the gods, is Thy mouth, and the earth, O Father of the worlds, is Thy lotus feet ; that time is Thy movement, O Lord That art all the gods ; that the quarters are Thy ears, and the Lord of the waters (Varuṇa) is Thy palate. They say that the sky is Thy navel, the wind-god Thy breath, the sun Thine eyes, and water Thy semen. Thine ego is the support of all *jīvas*, high and low. The moon is Thy mind, and heaven Thy head, O Lord ; the oceans are Thy belly, the mountains Thy skeleton, all annual plants and vines the hair on Thy body. The Vedic metres are the seven constituents of Thy body, O Lord That art the embodiment of the three Vedas, and the eternal *Dharmas* proclaimed by the Veda are Thy heart. The five secret *mantras* are Thy faces, O Lord, from which originate the thirty-eight classes of *mantras*. The self-luminous supreme Reality called Siva is Thy abiding state, O Lord. Thy shadow is seen as the waves of Adharma. *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are Thy three eyes, which bring about the multifarious creation. The primordial and predominantly metrical Veda is the

light that Thou, O Lord That art the soul of *Jñāna* and the Author of the *Sāstra*, vouchsafest. Thy supreme effulgence, O Protector of the Hills, in Which there is neither *Sattva*, *Rajas*, nor *Tamas*, Which is the *Brahmā* wherein all difference is negated, is beyond the reach of the Guardians of the worlds, of *Brahmā*, *Vishnu* and (*Indra*) the Ruler of the gods. Thy deeds, such as the destruction of the god of love, of the sacrifice (of *Daksha*), of the 'Three-fortresses', of the *Kālakūta* poison, and of many other enemies of living creatures, are hardly matters for praise, seeing that Thou dost not so much as notice the destruction of this universe of Thy creation, reduced to ashes at the time of the dissolution of the worlds, by a spark from the fire of Thine eye (21-32).

'What do those prating fools know of Thy pastimes, who allege with barefaced impudence that Thou art head over ears in love with *Umā* and art ever addicted to her company, when it is a fact that Thy feet are treasured in their hearts by men who find all delight in the Self and are the teachers and well-wishers of mankind ; or charge Thee, That art incandescent with the fire of Thy austerities, with haunting the cremation ground because Thou art cruel and harsh by nature ! Even *Brahmā* and the like are hardly capable of comprehending the essential truth of Thee That pervadest all that is, and art as far from the reach of *Pradhāna* as it is from the world of cause and effect ; much less can they praise Thee with anything like adequacy. How then could we, who are among their last creations ? We praise Thee according to our capacity. We can see, O Supreme Lord, only this form of Thine that is before our eyes, not the Transcendent Reality that lies beyond it. But this we know that Thou, Whose ways are inscrutable, showest Thyself only for the purpose of bringing comfort to the world' (33-35).

Sri Suka said : Seeing their agony, the compassionate Lord, the Friend of all that lives, was greatly moved ; and He spoke thus to *Sati*, His beloved. *Siva* said : ' Alas, O *Bhavānī*, see the grief caused to all creatures by the *Kālakūta* poison that has emerged from the churning of the sea of milk. I must assure the safety of those who yearn to escape with their lives. The protection

that one affords to the weak and the lowly, being capable of doing it, constitutes one's sole duty. The saintly save the lives of creatures who war with each other, deluded by their nescience, sacrificing their own life, which is after all evanescent. Hari, the All-Soul, is pleased with him who shows compassion. And when Hari is pleased, I am filled with joy, and so is all the world of the moving and the non-moving. Therefore I shall consume this poison. May the world gain all that is auspicious from this act of mine!' (36-40).

Sri Suka said : Having thus sought Bhavānī's assent, the exalted Lord, Who promotes the happiness of the world, prepared to swallow that poison ; and she, knowing His greatness, approved. Thereupon, gathering into the hollow of His hand the *Hālāhala* poison, which had spread everywhere, the Great God, the Lover of all that exists, swallowed it out of His abounding compassion. The poison that was in the water showed its virulence even against Him, leaving a blackness about His throat—that blackness which became the special adornment of the merciful Lord. Most good men suffer with the suffering world ; and that too is a way of propitiating the Supreme Lord, the All-Soul. Coming to hear of that act of Sambhu, the God of gods, the Fulfiller of all wishes of His devotees, all creatures, as well as the daughter of Daksha, Vishnu and Brahmā, extolled it. What little leaked from His hand as He drank the poison was appropriated by scorpions, snakes, poisonous herbs, and other venomous reptiles (41-46).

CHAPTER VIII

THE RISE OF NECTAR

Sri Suka went on : When the Lord of the bull flag had swallowed the poison, the delighted gods and Asuras churned the ocean with renewed vigour, and Kāmadhenu (the Cow-of-plenty) emerged from it. The sages, discourses on the Veda, received her, who helps with her products in the performance of fire-rites, so that they could offer the pure oblations in the sacrifices that take one along 'the Path of the gods,' O King. Then came the horse Uchchaisravas, white as the moon. Bali wanted

it; Indra did not, remembering the Lord's caution. Airāvata came out next, the king of elephants, which with its four tusks seemed to eclipse the glory of the white mountain (Kailāsa), the abode of the Lord (Śiva). Then from the ocean emerged the ruby known as Kaus-thubha, and the Lord Hari desired it, to adorn His breast. It was followed by the *pārijāta* tree, that ornament of the celestial world, which incessantly grants all the wishes of petitioners, even as you do on earth. The Apsarases came next; adorned with gold necklaces, and clad splendidly, they captivate the denizens of heaven with their seductive gaiety and playful looks (1-7).

Then there issued forth the Goddess Ramā, who is eternally devoted to the Lord and is Prosperity incarnate, lighting up the quarters with her radiance, like the flash of lightning from the Sudāmā mountain. All creatures, gods, Asuras and men, desired her, captivated by her beauty, nobility, youth and complexion. Mahendra brought and placed for her a marvellous throne. The great rivers, taking human forms, fetched sacred waters in golden pots. The earth produced all the herbs used in the consecratory bath. The cows gave their five purifying products, and the season of spring the fruits and flowers that the vernal months (Madhu and Mādhava) bring forth. The sages laid down the ritual of the bath, according to the scriptures. The Gandharvas sang auspicious songs, and the female dancers sang and danced. The clouds played the *mṛdanga*, drum and cymbal, the tabor and the trumpet, the conch-shell, the *viṇā* and the flute, raising a mighty concord of sweet sounds (8-13).

Thereupon the elephants of the cardinals bathed the Goddess Śrī, the faithful spouse, who holds a lotus in her hand, with water from full pots, to the accompaniment of Vedic hymns chanted by the Brahmanas. The ocean offered her as present a pair of yellow silks, and Varuṇa the garland Vaijayanti, round which hovered the bees drunk with honey. The Patriarch Viśvakarmā gave her many a jewel, Sarasvatī a pearl necklace, Brahmā a lotus, the Nāgas a pair of ear-pendants (14-16).

When all auspicious rites had been done and blessings

pronounced, she took in her hand a garland of lotuses over which the bees hovered humming, and stepped forth with a bashful smile on her beaming countenance, with its lovely cheeks and sparkling ear-drops. As she, with her tenuous belly, and her breasts that looked like twins, with no interval between them, and were smeared with sandal paste and saffron, moved to the lovely tinkling of her anklets, she looked like a golden creeper. Looking over that assembly of Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras, Siddhas, Chāraṇas, and others who peopled the celestial world, she could discover none among them who, by his flawless perfection, permanence, and the possession of abiding virtues, could be a fit spouse for her. 'It is a fact that he who is noted for his austerities has no control over his temper. Some here and there are endowed with wisdom, but do not possess detachment. Some have greatness, but have not overcome their weakness for women. Again, how can he who is dependent on others, be master of himself or of others? Dharma is to be found in some, but not fellow-feeling for all creatures. In others there is liberality, but it is not such as to bring them liberation. There are those who have valour, but that valour is not immune from the onslaught of time. I cannot choose him for spouse, who is not susceptible to the attractions of the senses. Some are long-lived, but their disposition is not calculated to make women happy. Others have the right disposition, but there is always uncertainty about how long they will live. Where both these qualifications are present, one finds that the ways and mode of life of the possessor are inauspicious. And He who is truly auspicious does not want me.' Having thus considered the matter in her mind, she fixed upon Mukunda as the spouse of her choice, since He excelled all others, being free from all desire because He was the sole repository of all noble and abiding virtues, and found all delight in Himself, and though free from the sway of the *guṇas* of Prakṛti, attracted to Himself all the supernatural powers (17-23).

Placing on His shoulders the lovely garland of fresh-blown lotuses alive with the hum of the swarm of drunken bees, she stood by His side, while her eyes, shining with a

bashful smile, had already taken her to her home on His breast. He, the Father of the three worlds, made for her, their mother, the Goddess Sri in whom were gathered all opulence and power, a permanent home on His breast, from where she promoted by her kindly glance the interests of all her children, the worlds and their rulers. Then there swelled forth on the air the music of conch, *tūrya*, *mṛdanga* and other instruments and the songs of the attendants of the gods and their dancing womenfolk. Brahmā, Rudra, Angiras and other Patriarchs showered flowers on the all-powerful Lord as they extolled Him by chanting the Vedic hymns which truly proclaim His indefeasible glory. The gods and all other creatures as well as the Patriarchs were endowed with exemplary disposition and every other virtue by the mere glance of the Goddess Sri resting on them, and they attained the summit of felicity; while the Daityas and Dānavas, ignored by Lakshmi, were impotent, covetous, disheartened and shameless, O King (24-29).

Then emerged (from the churning) the Goddess Vāruṇī (presiding over one kind of liquor), the maid with the lotus eyes, and the Asuras, permitted by Hari, took her to themselves. Afterwards there rose from the sea, as it was being churned by the progeny of Kaśyapa for the sake of nectar, a marvellous personage, great King. With arms long and plump, the neck formed like the conch, the eyes a pleasing red, He was dark-complexioned and in the first flush of youth. He wore a garland and was adorned with every ornament, and clad in yellow silks. Broad-chested, and with glossy curls, he was comely in appearance, with his flashing ear-pendants; and his gait was like the lion's. He wore bracelets and carried a pot filled with nectar. He was in fact a partial incarnation of Vishnu known as Dhanvantari. He was the seer of the Āyurveda, and had a share in the sacrificial oblations (30-35).

The Asuras, on seeing him and the pot filled to the brim with nectar, snatched it from his hands, coveting everything as they did. When the pot of nectar was thus being taken away by the Asuras, the gods with woe-begone faces sought the help of Hari. The exalted

Lord, Who fulfils the wishes of His followers, noticed their depression, and He told them, 'Do not be down-hearted. I shall secretly achieve your purpose by my Yoga-Māyā'. And the Asuras in their greed began quarrelling among themselves, my Lord, shouting at each other, 'I must drink first, not you!!' 'The gods, having been equally responsible (for securing nectar) by contributing as much effort as we did, are entitled to equal shares in this enterprise, as in the Sattrā sacrifice. That is the old established rule,' said the weaker among the sons of Diti, as they repeatedly sought to restrain the stronger, who had got hold of the pot, being envious of their luck (36-40).

Meanwhile the Lord Vishnu, Who was a master of all expedients, took a marvellous female form, which baffled all description. She was dark-blue like the lily that captivates the eye; she was beautiful in every limb—the symmetrical ears adorned with pendants; the face with its lovely cheeks and lofty nose; the full and rounded breasts, whose weight indicated the coming of age; and the tenuous belly; the eyes that seemed to be frightened by the hum of bees drawn to the mouth by its fragrance; the mass of hair on the head twined with a wreath of jasmine that had just blossomed; the lovely neck adorned with a jewel, and shoulder-rings on the beautiful arms. A girdle shone on her ample hips, which looked like an island encircled by her spotless raiment; and anklets adorned the feet that were charming in their movement. She lit the fires of longing in the hearts of the chiefs of the Daityas by her glances, with their coy merriment, from under the dancing eyebrows (41-46).

CHAPTER IX

THE LORD FOOLS THE ASURAS

Sri Suka said : The Asuras abjured all kindly feelings towards their fellows, and behaved like robbers, snatching the pot from each other's hands and reviling each other. And then they saw the woman coming along. Exclaiming, 'Ah, what a beauty! How splendid! How glorious her youth!' they ran after her, their hearts in a

tumult, and questioned her. 'Who are you, O lady with eyes like lotus petals? Where do you come from? What do you wish to do? To whom do you belong, O lady of the beautiful thighs, who raise a tempest in our hearts? We are perfectly sure that you have been soiled by the touch of no creature, god, Daitya, Siddha, Gandharva, Chāraṇa or Guardian of the worlds; why speak of mere men? Assuredly Brahmā, taking pity on mortals, has sent you, O beautiful one, so that you may rejoice their minds and their senses. Honoured and lovely lady, you should bring happiness to us, who are kinsmen quarrelling among ourselves over one thing and have become inveterate enemies. We are all sons of Kaśyapa and thus brothers, and have all exerted ourselves equally (for securing nectar). Distribute the nectar among us justly, so that there will be no further quarrel' (1-7).

Thus requested by the Daityas, Hari, Who had taken a feminine guise by the power of His Yoga-Maya, laughed and spoke to them, as He cast a bewitching glance at them from the corner of His eye. The Lord said, 'How could you, sons of Kaśyapa, run after me, a harlot? Surely the wise man would never put his faith in wantons. It has been said, O enemies of the gods, that the friendship of wolves and light women, who seek new prey every day, is fleeting and fickle' (8-10).

Srī Suka said: Reassured by her banter, they laughed an enigmatic laugh and gave her the pot of nectar. Taking the pot, she spoke these words, rendered charming by the slight smile that accompanied them: 'I shall distribute this nectar if you agree in advance to whatever I shall do, right or wrong.' The great Asuras could not make out what she had in mind, but agreed (11-13).

Then, having fasted, they bathed, made oblations in the fire, gave donatives for the benefit of the cows, the Brahmanas and all other creatures, and had blessings pronounced on them by the Brahmanas. Clad in new clothes of their choice, they adorned themselves and sat down on *kuśa* grass with the ends pointing east. When the gods and the sons of Diti had taken their seats facing east, in a hall with flowers and lights, where fragrant

incense was burning, she, whose thighs were like the trunk of the elephant, walked in slowly because of the heaviness of the large hip covered with fine linen, her eyes in a whirl of intoxication, and her breasts standing out like jars. She entered with the pot in her hands, to the tinkling of her gold anklets. As the gods and the Asuras looked at her—the Companion of the Goddess Sri, Who is spoken of as the Paradevatā (the Supreme Godhead)—with gold ear-pendants on the beautiful ears, her cheeks and nose and mouth lovely, the ends of her breast-bands hanging loose, they swooned in ecstasy under the smiling glance she cast on them (14-18).

Deciding that it would be as unwise to give nectar to the Daityas, who were cruel by nature, as to feed milk to snakes, Achyuta did not give them any share of the nectar. The Master of the world arranged for their sitting in separate rows, and made them take their seats accordingly. Beguiling the Daityas by His assiduous attentions, He gave the gods, who were farther away, portions of the nectar that redeems from old age and death, taking them from the pot that He carried. The Asuras, whose friendship He had won, remained quiet, respecting their promise, and thinking it unbecoming to quarrel with a woman. Having fallen in love with her, they feared to lose her favour, and they were restrained, too, by the marked regard she showed them. So they said not a word to displease her. Svarbhānu, who had disguised himself as a god and taken his seat with them, drank the nectar, but he was pointed out by the sun and the moon. Hari severed his head, as he drank, with the razor-edged discus, and his trunk, untouched by nectar, fell down. But, the head having gained immortality, Aja (Brahmā) appointed him as a planet; it is that planet which, entertaining animosity against them, pursues the sun and the moon at the time of the eclipse. When the gods had drunk most of the nectar, the exalted Lord Hari, the Protector of the worlds, resumed His own form before the eyes of the great Asura chiefs. Thus, though the gods and the Asuras had started (on the quest of nectar) in the same place, at the same time, with the same object, employing the same instruments

and materials, and doing the same set of actions, they fared very differently from each other in the event. The gods got nectar without difficulty, because they were devoted to the lotus feet of the Lord, unlike the Asuras. Whatever men do for the sake of the body, their children, and so on, using all their resources—their wealth, the work of their hands, their thoughts and their words and their very lives—proves futile, because of the sense of difference that they entertain. But, if these are dedicated to the Lord, they would be productive of allround good, like the watering of the roots of a tree, since He is present in all that exists (19-29).

CHAPTER X

THE GODS AND THE ASURAS GO TO WAR

Sri Suka said : Thus the Dānavas and the Daityas, though they took part in the effort to secure nectar and were very active, got nothing of it, because they had no devotion to Vāsudeva. Having procured the nectar and fed it to the gods, who put their faith in Him, the Lord mounted Garuda and vanished from view as all the world looked on. The sons of Diti could not bear to think of the supreme good fortune that had befallen their rivals, and they advanced against the gods with upraised weapons. The gods, strengthened by the nectar they had drunk, and relying upon the support of Narayana, offered armed resistance (1-4).

Thereupon there broke out a terrible and tumultuous conflict between the gods and the Asuras on the seashore ; to think of it is enough to make the hair stand on end. The enemies, their hearts raging, attacked each other at close quarters with swords, arrows and every other kind of weapon. There rose a tremendous din—the blare of conches and *tūryas*, the booming of *mṛdanga*, drum and kettle-drum, the cries of elephants and horses, the shouts of the chariot forces and the infantry. Chariot closed in with chariot, foot-soldier with foot-soldier, horseman with horseman and elephant-rider with elephant-rider. The fighters used all kinds of mounts, some employing camels, others elephants, donkeys, gaurs, bears, panthers,

and lions. Others used vultures, herons, cranes, eagles, falcons, whales, *śarabhas*, buffaloes, rhinoceroses, bulls, *gavayas* and *arūṇas*. Some others rode on jackals, rats, chameleons, or hares, on men, goats, or antelopes, on swans and pigs; yet others, on land-birds and sea-birds and other creatures of strange and uncouth appearance. And they went on swelling the rival armies that faced each other, O King. Like sea-monsters arrayed in two seas confronting each other, O King, shone the forces of the gods and the *Dānavas*, with their many and various flags and buntings, their priceless umbrellas of a brilliant white, with handles encrusted with diamonds, their fly-whisks and peacock-feather fans, and their splendid ranks of warriors, whose upper garments and turbans waved in the wind, while their armours, ornaments and weapons glittered in the dazzling sunlight (5-15).

Bali, the son of Virochana, the Commander-in-chief of the *Asuras*, rode in the vehicle called 'Vaiḥāyasa', which Maya had built for him, and which could go anywhere at will; furnished with everything that would be needed in war, it was marvellous beyond compare, my Lord; inscrutable and impossible to describe, being seen one moment only to disappear the next. Riding in that most splendid of cars, surrounded by all his commanders of divisions, and those who carried the fly-whisks and the priceless umbrella, he shone like the moon on the mountain of the rising sun. On all sides of him, mounted on vehicles, were the *Asuras*, who commanded under him, Namuchi, Sambara, Bāṇa, Vipracitti, Ayomukha, Dvimūrdhā, Kālanābha, Praheti, Heti, Ilvala, Sakuni, Bhuta-santāpa, Vajra-damshtra and Virochana, Hayagrivā, Sankuśiras. Kapila, Megha-dundubhi, Tāraka, Chakradṛk, Sumbha, Niśumbha, Jambha, Utkala, Arishta, Arishtanemi, and Maya, the ruler of 'the Three-fortresses', and others such as the Paulomās, Kāleyas, and Nivātakavachas,—all of whom had been denied a share of the nectar and had got nothing for their labour but their pains. They had all won many a victory over the gods in battle. They uttered loud war-cries and blew on their conches, which made a tremendous din (16-24).

Seeing his rival's overwhelming pride, the slayer of Bala (Indra) was indignant. The Ruler of the celestial world shone in his splendour as he rode on Airāvata, the elephant of the East, like the sun rising on the eastern mountain with its many cascades flowing down its sides. The gods were arrayed all around him with their many mounts, flags and weapons, and so were the Guardians of the worlds, Vāyu, Agni, and others, along with their followers. They engaged in hand to hand fights, pushing to the front and challenging each other by name, with harsh provocation. Bali fought with Indra, Guha with Tāraka, Varuṇa with Heti and Mitra with Praheti, O King; Yama fought with Kālanābha, Viśvakarmā with Maya, Sambara with Tvashtā, Virochana with Savitā, Namuchi with Aparājita, the Aśvin twins with Vṛshaparvā, and the sun-god with the one hundred sons of Bali, of whom Bāṇa was the eldest. Soma (the moon-god) fought with Rāhu, Vāyu (the wind-god) with Paulomā, the Goddess of the irresistible strength, Bhadrakālī, with Niśumbha and Sumbha. Vṛshākapi fought with Jambha, Vibhāvasu (the Fire-god) with Mahisha, and Ilvala and Vātāpi with the sons of Brahmā, O subduer of the foe. Durmarshā fought with Kāma (the god of love), Utkala with the mother-goddesses, Brhaspati with Uśanas, and Śanaiśchara with Naraka. The Maruts fought with the Nivātakavachas, the Vasus, who are gods, with the Kāleyas, the Viśvedevas with the Paulomās, and the Rudras with the Krodhavaśas (25-35).

Thus, the Asuras and the great gods, bent on victory, engaged in single combat, and fell on each other with sharp arrows, swords and javelins, exerting all their strength. With *bhusundis*, discuses, maces, spears, *pattisās*, javelins, burning brands, tridents, hatchets, scimitars, *bhallas*, iron clubs, hammers and *bhindipālas*, they cut off the heads of their antagonists. Riders on elephants and horses, charioteers, foot-soldiers and those who rode many other kinds of mount, were cut down along with their mounts, their arms, thighs, necks and feet sheared, their flags, bows, armours and ornaments shattered to bits. The thick pall of dust that rose from the battle-field pounded by the trampling

of feet and of chariot-wheels, hid from view the four quarters, the sky and the sun ; the dust subsided when the ground was drenched by the stream of blood that flowed. It was strewn thick with heads from which diadems and ear-pendants had flown off, and in which the eyes still glowered with anger and the teeth bit the lips fiercely ; and with mighty arms, covered with ornaments, and holding weapons, and thighs like elephants' trunks. Headless trunks jumped up and pursued the enemy with upraised weapons, looking at them with the eyes that were still in their fallen heads (36-40).

Bali aimed ten arrows against Mahendra, three against Airāvata, four against the four fighters who protected Airāvata's legs and one against the mahout. Before they could reach their targets, the swift-handed Śakra had cut them down with a disdainful laugh, using an equal number of sharp *bhallas*. Provoked by that splendid exploit, Bali snatched a javelin ; but Indra cut it down even before the weapon, which dazzled and burned like a great fire-brand, had left his hand. And when he followed this with many a weapon, spear, trident, javelin and so on, the all-powerful Indra cut down each one of them instantly. Then the Asura resorted to the practice of the Asuras' sorcery. He made himself invisible. A mountain appeared over the heads of the celestial host, my lord. And from that fell burning trees set ablaze by a forest fire, and rocks with sharp edges, and they pulverized the enemy. There fell, too, huge pythons, fanged vipers, scorpions, lions, tigers and boars, which played havoc with the great tuskers. These were followed by hundreds of naked Rākshasis armed with spears and shouting, ' Cut them to pieces, smash them ! ' and many contingents of Rākshasas, my lord. Then were seen in the sky huge clouds buffeted by fierce winds ; deep ear-splitting thunder came from them, as they let down showers of live coals. A huge fire, which was raised by the Daitya and aided by the wind, burnt the celestial army as if it were the conflagration that destroys the world. And the sea was seen rising up on all sides and overflowing its bounds, whipped up by terrific winds and frightful with its billows and eddies. When such terrifying phantoms were raised by

other great Asura wizards too, they themselves remaining invisible, the celestial forces were thrown into a panic. Indra and others, not knowing how to ward them off, prayerfully meditated on the Lord, the Protector of the worlds, Who thereupon appeared on the scene. He was seen riding on the shoulders of Suparṇa. He was clad in yellow silks, and His eyes were like the fresh-blown lotus. He carried weapons in His eight hands, and dazzled all eyes with the splendour of the Goddess Sṛī (the mark on His breast), the Kausthubha jewel and the priceless crown and ear-pendants. The moment He entered the scene the phantoms created by the black magic of the Asuras were dispelled by the glory of the All-Highest, like the dream when the dreamer wakes. To think of Hari is to be freed from all misfortunes (41-55).

Seeing the Lord riding Garuda on the battle-field, Kālanemi, who rode on a lion (the elephant's foe) whirled his spear in his hand and threw it at the Supreme Ruler of the three worlds. But He grasped it lightly before it landed on Garuda's head and struck a blow with it, despatching the enemy and his mount. Then Mālyavan confronted Him, Whose discus had cut off the heads of the exceedingly powerful Māli and Sumāli and felled them on the battle-field. He aimed a blow at the head of the king of the birds with his sharp mace; but before it could fall, the Primordial Lord had cut off the head of the yelling foe with His discus (56-57).

CHAPTER XI

THE ROUT OF THE ASURAS

Sṛī Suka said: The gods, Sakra, Vāyu and others, recovering their spirits by the abounding grace of the Supreme Lord, fiercely returned to the attack, assailing those with whom they had been engaged in single combat. When the glorious Pākaśāsana raised in his wrath the thunderbolt to launch it against the son of Virochana, the latter's subjects exclaimed in dismay, 'Alas, alas!' Indra, armed with the thunderbolt, scornfully addressed the well-equipped Asura, who moved courageously on the battlefield and now confronted him. He said:

' You would like to use your magic like a trickster, you fool, against us, who are masters over all Māyā, and defeat us, as a cheat takes in ignorant men by making them close their eyes and walks off with their possessions. I shall cast into deeper hells than any they had ever known those ignorant robbers who would like to climb to heaven by their magic tricks, and even go beyond it. This day, with the thunderbolt of the hundred joints, I shall cut off your head, you stupid creature with your wicked sorceries. Come and do your worst, you and your kinsmen ' (1-6).

Bali replied, ' All who engage in war under the compulsion of destiny must be prepared for what the whirligig of time brings—defeat and death as well as victory and fame. Wise men realize that these things are ordered by Providence, and they neither rejoice nor repine. But you have no wisdom in such matters. You are to be pitied because you imagine that the ordering of these things is in your hands ; so we shall not mind your harsh and wounding words ' (7-9).

Srī Suka went on : Having thus rebuked the all-powerful ruler of the gods, the valiant Asura, who could give a thrashing to the most doughty of warriors, followed that stinging reproof with sharp-pointed arrows, drawing his bow to the full. The god resented being snubbed by the enemy, who spoke the truth, as the elephant resents the goad. He, the scourge of the foe, hurled at him the never-failing thunderbolt, and he tumbled down to the ground with his mount, like a mountain whose wings had been cut off. Jambha, the friend of Bali, seeing his companion and bosom friend fall, confronted the foe, standing up for the cause of his dead friend. Riding on his lion, he of the immense strength advanced upon Sakra and struck him swiftly with his uplifted mace on the collar-bone, and then he struck the elephant. The tusker fell on its knees, reeling under the blow, and was in great pain and distress. Thereupon Mātali brought up the chariot to which a thousand horses were yoked ; and the ruler of heaven, leaving the elephant, got into it. The great Dānava admired the enterprise shown by the driver on the battlefield. And

he smiled as he threw at him his flaming spear. Mātali bravely bore the terrible pain caused by the wound. And Indra, incensed, cut off the head of Jambha with the thunderbolt (10-18).

Hearing from the sage Nārada of the killing of Jambha, his kinsmen, Namuchi, Bala and Pāka came there in all haste. Stinging Indra to the quick with their harsh words, they covered him with a shower of arrows like clouds letting down a torrent of rain on the mountain-side. Bala of the swift hand struck the thousand horses of Indra with as many arrows simultaneously. Pāka hit Mātali and the chariot, covering every part of it, with a hundred arrows apiece, aiming and despatching them all by a single motion of the hand, and that was a marvellous sight on the battlefield. Namuchi struck Indra with fifteen powerful arrows with golden shafts, and let off a mighty yell, which sounded like thunder from a rain-cloud. The Asuras covered Indra, his chariot and driver, with a network of arrows, completely hiding them from view as clouds hide the sun during the rains. Not seeing him, the celestials and their followers, who were vanquished by the enemy forces and left leaderless, were bewildered, and they cried in dismay, like traders on the high seas whose ship has broken under them. Then Indra emerged from the cage of arrows along with his chariot, horses, flagstaff and charioteer. And like the sun rising at dawn, he lit up the four quarters, the sky and the earth by his splendour. Seeing his forces pressed hard by the enemy, the god, the Wielder of the thunderbolt, seized it in his wrath to slay the foe. With that weapon of the eight edges he cut off the heads of Bala and Pāka before the very eyes of their kin, striking terror into their hearts, O King (19-28).

Namuchi, filled with grief and indignation, could not tolerate that slaughter. He put out every ounce of his strength in a fierce attempt to slay Indra, O ruler of men. Snatching an iron lance, furnished with bells and embellished with gold, he rushed upon him in wrath with the intimidating cry, 'Dead you are!' and let fly at the King of the gods, roaring like the lion. As it came along the sky with terrific speed, Indra cut it into a thousand pieces with his arrows; and the Lord of

heaven struck him wrathfully on the neck with the thunderbolt, designing to cut off his head. But the powerful thunderbolt could not even rupture his skin, though launched by the Ruler of the gods with all his force. It was something unbelievable—that the weapon that had cut down the supremely valiant Vṛttra, should be baffled by the skin of Namuchi's neck. Indra feared that foe against whom the thunderbolt was powerless. 'Has this happened by the design of Providence to confound the world? This thunderbolt, with which I cut off the wings of the mountains when they flew where they liked and came down on the earth with all their weight, causing the destruction of living beings; with which I felled Vṛttra, who was Tvashtā's powerful penance personified, as well as others of extraordinary strength, whose skins had remained undamaged by the strongest of arrows—this has now failed me, when aimed against a petty Asura! I will not take it up again. It is just a stick, for all that it was powered by Brahmanical puissance. It is of no use' (29-36).

While Indra was thus reflecting bitterly, a voice from the sky told him, 'This Dānava can be killed neither by what is dry, nor by what is wet. As I gave him the boon that death shall not come to him from what is wet or what is dry, you will have to think of some other expedient for despatching your foe, O Maghavān'. Hearing the voice of the Divine speak thus, Maghavān pondered with a collected mind and realized that foam was the expedient indicated, partaking as it does of the nature of both (wet and dry). He severed Namuchi's head with foam, which is neither dry nor wet. And the sages extolled the all-powerful ruler of heaven and showered him with flowers. The chiefs of the Gandharvas, Viśvāvasu and Parāvasu, sang. The celestial kettle-drums sounded and the female dancers danced joyously (37-41).

In the same way, Vāyu, Agni, Varuṇa and others too slew their foes, with floods of arrows, as lions slaughter deer. The celestial sage Nārada, sent by Brahmā, when it looked as if the Asuras might be exterminated, restrained them. Nārada told them, 'You, under the protecting arm of Narayana, got nectar. And you

have prospered by the grace of the Goddess Sri. Desist from hostilities'. And they, showing due respect to the sage's counsel, discarded the bitterness of anger, and returned to heaven, their followers singing their praises. The survivors (among the Asuras) took Bali's body with Nārada's permission and went to the mountain of the setting sun. There Uśanas restored to life, using his esoteric lore, the *Sanjivini*, those whose limbs had remained intact and who had still their necks whole. Bali, touched by Uśanas, recovered his memory and the use of his faculties. He did not despond in defeat, because he saw clearly into the truth of the world (42-48).

CHAPTER XII

SIVA TAKEN IN BY VISHNU'S MĀYA

Sri Bādarāyaṇi said: The Lord of the bull flag, Giriśa, coming to hear how Hari had fed nectar to the gods, after deluding the Dānavas by disguising Himself as a woman, went, riding on His bull, accompanied by the Goddess, and with His attendants, about Him, to where Hari dwelt, from the desire to see (that form). Received along with Umā affectionately by the exalted Lord and entertained with all hospitality, Bhava praised Him. Then, seated in comfort, He addressed Hari with a wondering smile on His face (1-3).

Mahādeva said: 'O God of gods That pervadest the world and art Thyself the world as well as its Ruler, Thou art the Soul in all creatures, the Cause of their coming into existence, and their Inner Controller. Thou art the Brahma to Which the world owes its beginning, middle and end; Which is the Origin of subject and object, of the experiencer and the world of experience, but Which, being immutable, is conditioned by none of these states, and is pure Truth and Consciousness. The sages, who are wholly free from desire and want only liberation, worship Thy lotus feet alone, abjuring all attachments here and elsewhere. Thou art the Brahma, Which is Immortal Perfection, Bliss unmixed with sorrow, and untainted by the *guṇas*; Which is changeless, and beside Which there is nought

else, while It is different from all else. Thou art, too, the Cause of the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, and its Soul. Thou rulest it for its good, while Thou Thyself hast no need of another. Thou art the One Reality, both cause and effect, the One and the many ; like gold, which may exist both as gold and as ornaments made of gold, there being no difference between them in substance. It is ignorance that makes men see diversity in Thee. The appearance of diversity in Thee That art unconditioned by limiting adjuncts is due to the *guṇas* (4-8).

‘Some speak of Thee as the Brahma ; others as Dharma ; yet others as the Supreme Spirit that is beyond Prakṛti and Puruṣa ; or as the Transcendent Lord possessing the nine powers ; or as the Mahā-puruṣa Who knows no change and is ever free. Neither I, nor Brahmā (whose life extends to aeons), nor Marichi and other seers, really know even the work of Thy hands (the universe), because, though we are all creations of pure *Sattva*, we are blinded by Thy *Māyā*. How, then, could Daityas, men and others know, who owe their origin and nature to *Tamas* and *Rajas*? But Thou pervadest and thus knowest all this universe, and its creation, preservation and destruction by Thee, as well as the desires that animate all creatures, their bondage by birth, and their liberation. For Thou enterest all beings, stationary and moving, as well as the sky, even as air does, and art the animating soul and the principle of consciousness in them. I have seen the incarnations Thou hast taken, playing Thy play by means of the *guṇas*. But I long to see the semblance of a woman that Thou tookest. We have come, moved by an immense curiosity, to see that form with which Thou didst delude the sons of Diti and feed nectar to the gods’ (9-13).

Srī Suka said : Thus requested by the Lord Who is armed with the trident, the exalted Lord Vishnu laughed a significant laugh, as He replied to Girīśa. The Lord said : ‘When the vessel containing nectar had been spirited away, I assumed the disguise of a woman to confound the Daityas, as the only way to serve the purpose of the gods. Since Thou wishest to see it, I shall show Thee, O First of the gods, that form which should

greatly appeal to those who are susceptible to passion, because it is a great inflamer of love' (14-16).

Srī Suka said : Even as He said this, the exalted Lord disappeared, and Bhava waited there with Umā, and looked about Him. And there He saw a garden full of flowering trees of many kinds, bearing flowers and tender red shoots, and a beautiful woman playing ball in it. The splendid linen that swathed her hips was held by a girdle. Her waist seemed as if it would snap with every step she took on feet that looked like tender shoots, under the great weight of her breasts which shook every time she stooped and stood up, and of the priceless necklaces she wore. The pupils of her long and restless eyes seemed to flit apprehensively as her glance followed the vagrant ball straying in every direction. And her face was the lovelier for the cheeks lit up by the burnished ear-pendants on her ears and the mass of coal-black curls. Fastening with her lovely left hand her raiment that had come loose and her tresses that had escaped their bands, while with the other she struck the ball, she held the world spell-bound by her power of Māyā (17-21).

The Great God, as He looked at her, was bewitched by the sidelong glance accompanied by the discreet, bashful smile with which she played ball. His mind was in a turmoil as she looked at Him and He returned the look, and He remembered neither Himself, nor Umā who was near Him, nor His attendants. As the woman pursued the ball that she had sent flying far away, the wind carried off her light garment along with her girdle before the God Bhava's eyes. Seeing her in that state, with her beauty delighting the mind and the eye, the glance she stole at Him from the corner of her lovely eye betraying her longing for Him, Bhava—just think of it !—fell in love with her. His sense of discretion deserting Him, His heart fiercely agitated by the passion she roused in Him, He unabashedly sought her, even though Bhavānī was looking (22-25).

Seeing Him coming along she, naked and greatly ashamed, would not stop for Him, but hid herself behind the trees laughing. The Lord Bhava pursued her as the tusker pursues the cow-elephant, his senses in a tumult,

helpless in the grip of passion. Swiftly overtaking her, He caught hold of the unwilling woman by her braid, and drawing her to Him, embraced her. Hugged by the Lord, as the tusker covers the cow, she with dishevelled hair struggled in the arms of the Great God ; and then, freeing herself, she, who was none other than the Māyā created by the Lord ran, my dear, heavy-hipped as she was. And Rudra followed after Vishnu of the marvellous exploits, as if He had been vanquished by Kāma, His foe. And as He ran, His seed, which had infinite puissance, spilled like that of the great elephant in rut when he pursues the cow in heat. And all those spots on earth where the seed of the mighty Lord dropped, became rich in deposits of silver and gold, O King. And Hara (as He thus pursued her) appeared in many places on the banks of streams and lakes, on hills, in the forests and the woods, and wherever sages happened to live. When his virility had thus been drained out of Him, He realized that He had been confounded by the Lord's Māyā, O best of Kings, and He was forthwith freed from His infatuation. Then, as He recalled the greatness of the Lord of the unfathomable prowess, the Soul of the universe, He was not surprised at what He Himself had experienced at His hands (26-36).

Seeing that He had regained His serenity and was untroubled by shame, Madhusūdāna was pleased. And resuming His own masculine form, He thus spoke to Him. The exalted Lord said, ' I am happy to see Thee, O First of the gods and my dear Friend, re-established in Thy true nature, though at first taken in by My Māyā. Where is the person other than Thee Who, having been caught in the snare of the senses, can escape My Māyā, since those who have not won self-control cannot free themselves from the objects of desire which it goes on creating ? When, at the appropriate time, My Māyā, composed of the *guṇas*, is united with Me and is active in one or other of its aspects, fulfilling My purposes as the Time-Spirit, it shall not confound Thee ' (37-40).

Sri Suka said : Thus duly honoured by the Lord, Who is distinguished by the Srīvatsa mark, He (Siva) took leave of Him, and going round Him reverently, returned with His retinue to His own home, O King

There, while the great sages were extolling Him, the exalted Lord Bhava spoke lovingly to Bhavānī, the Māyā who was part of His own body: 'Did you see Māyā at work, my dear, that Māyā which is submissive to the Lord Who knows no birth, the All-Highest, the Supreme Godhead? When I, the master of all arts, and subject to nobody's control, fall under her spell, what can others do, who have no independence? This is the Primordial Lord, the object of my yogic meditation lasting for a thousand years, about which you enquired when I emerged from *samādhi*. He is beyond the reach of time, even as He baffles the Veda' (41-44).

Sri Suka said : I have now recounted to you, my son, the exploit of the Wielder of the Sārnga, Who bore on His back the great mountain when the ocean was being churned. The strenuous efforts made by him who recites this or hears it recited again and again never go in vain. The extolling of the glorious qualities of the illustrious Lord rids one of all the weariness of *samsāra*. I make my prostrations to Him, Whose feet are beyond the reach of the evil-minded, but are gained by love ; and Who, deluding the enemies of the gods by adopting the deceptive guise of a woman, fed the gods, who had taken refuge in Him, on nectar got by churning the ocean (45-47).

CHAPTER XIII

THE LATER MANVANTARAS

Srī Suka said : The Manu of the seventh and current Manvantara is the son of Vivasvān, who is known to fame as Srāddhadeva. You shall hear the names of his children. Ikshvāku, Nabhaga, Dhṛṣhta, Śaryāti, Narishyanta, Nābhāga, Dishta (the seventh of them), Karūsha, Prshata, and Vasumān, the tenth—these are the ten sons of Vaivasvata Manu, O scorcher of the foe. The gods are the Ādityas, Vasus, Rudras, Viśvedevas, the company of the Maruts, the Aśvin twins and the Rbhus, O King, and the Indra of the Manvantara is Purandara. The seven sages are Kaśyapa, Atri, Vasishtha, Viśvāmitra, Gautama, Jamadagni and Bharadvāja. In this Manvan-

tara too, the Lord Vishnu was incarnate as a son of Kaśyapa and Aditi, the youngest of the Ādityas, taking the form of a dwarf. I have thus told you briefly of the first seven Manvantaras (including the present one). I shall now speak of the Manvantaras yet to come, each of which will see an incarnation of Vishnu. Vivasvān had two wives, the daughters of Viśvakarmā, known as Samjñā and Chāyā, of whom I have told you already, great King. Some speak of Vadavā as the third wife (of Vivasvān). The three children of Samjñā were Yama, Yamī and Śrāddhadeva. You shall now hear of the children of Chāyā; they were Sāvarnī. Tapati, a daughter who married Samvarāṇa, and Sanaischara, who was the third. The Asvins were born to Vadavā (1-10).

When the eighth Manvantara is ushered in, Sāvarnī will be the Manu. Nirmoka, Virajaska and others will be the sons of Sāvarnī, O King. The gods of the Manvantara will be the Sutapas, the Virajas and the Amṛtaprabhas. Over them Bali, the son of Virochana, will rule as Indra. Having given away (in the present Manvantara) the entire earth to Vishnu, Who begged of him as much earth as would be covered by three paces, he will renounce the position of Indra (which he will obtain in the coming Manvantara) and attain liberation. He who was put in bonds by the exalted Lord, and placed by Him in Sutala, which is superior to heaven, because He was pleased with him, rules there like Indra to this day. Gālava, Dīptiman, Rāma (Parasurama), the son of Droṇa (Asvatthāmā), Kṛpa, Rṣyasṅga, my father, the blessed Bādarāyaṇa, all of whom are now living in their respective hermit settlements, famed for their *yogic* powers, will be the seven seers of that Manvantara. The exalted Lord born as the son of Devaguhyā and Sarasvatī, and known as Sārvabhauma, will deprive Purandara of his position and install Bali in it (11-17).

Dakshasāvarnī, the son of Varuṇa, will be the ninth Manu. Bhūtaketu, Dīptaketu and others will be his sons, O King. The gods will be the Paras, Marīchi-garbhas and others, and Adbhuta will be the Indra. Dyutimān and others will be the sages in that Manvantara. To Āyushmān will be born Rṣhabha, a digit of the Lord, of Ambudhārā; and Adbhuta will rule over the

three worlds which R̥shabha will bring under his sway (18-20).

The great Brahmasāvarṇi, son of Upasloka, will be the tenth Manu. His sons will be Bhūrishēṇa and the rest. The sages will be Havishmān, Sukṛti, Satya, Jaya, Mūrti and others. The Suvasanas, Viruddhas and others will be the gods, and Sambhu will be the Ruler of the gods. The exalted Lord Vishnu, born of Vishūchi with a fraction of Himself in the house of a Patriarch, will be known as Vishvaksena. He will become friends with Sambhu (21-23).

The self-controlled Dharmasāvarṇi will be the eleventh Manu, and He will have ten sons, Satya, Dharma and others. The Vihangamas, Kāmagamas and Nirvāṇaruchis will be the gods. Vaidhṛta will be their Indra. Aruṇa and others will be the sages. Dharmasetu, the son of Āryaka and Vaidhṛtā, a digit of Hari, will sustain the three worlds (24-26).

Rudrasāvarṇi will be the twelfth Manu, O King. Devavān, Upadeva, Devasreshta and others will be his sons. R̥tadhāmā will be the Indra, and the Haritas and others will be the gods. Tapomūrti, Tapasvī, Āgnīdhṛaka and others will be the sages. The Lord Svadhāmā, a digit of Hari, born as the son of Satyasahas and Sūnṛtā, will take care of that Manvantara (27-29).

The self-controlled Devasāvarṇi will be the thirteenth Manu. Chitrasena, Vichitra and others will be his sons. The gods will be known as the Sukarmās and the Sutrāmās, and Divaspati will be the Indra. Nirmoka, Tattvadarśa and others will be the sages. Yogeśwara, an incarnation of Hari, who will further the purposes of the ruler of heaven, will be born of Devahotra and Br̥hatī (30-32).

Indrasāvarṇi will be the fourteenth Manu. Uru, Gambhīrabuddhi and others will be the sons of Indrasāvarṇi. The Pavitras and the Chākshushas will be the gods, and Suchi will be the Indra. Agni, Bāhu, Suchi, Śuddha, Magadha and others will be the seers. Hari, Who will then be incarnate as Br̥hadbhānu, the son of Sattrāyaṇa and Vitānā, will bring about the widest diffusion of ritual observances. I have now told you of the fourteen Manvantaras, covering the past, the present and

the future, which constitute the Kalpa lasting for a thousand years (30-36).

CHAPTER XIV

OFFICE-HOLDERS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

The King prayed : Please tell me what work the Manus and others who lived in these Manvantaras were entrusted with and by whom (1).

The sage replied : The Manus, their sons, the sages, the Indras and the companies of the gods were all under the control of the exalted and supreme Lord and did His will, O King. Yajna and the rest, of whom I have told you, were all incarnations of the Lord. The Manus and others do the world's work under their prompting and guidance. At the end of each cycle of four *yugas*, the seers rediscover by their austerities the Veda, which had been lost in the oblivion of time and which is the source of the eternal Dharma. Then the Manus, each in his time, inspired by Hari, propagate in the world the Dharma made up of four quarters, O King, with their senses under control. The Rulers of the people (the sons of the Manus) and their descendants in due succession protect their subjects for the duration of the Manvantara. The gods, and others who are associated with them in this behalf receive the sacrificial oblations. Indra, enjoying the secure sovereignty of the three worlds, given him by the Lord, guards over them and sends them copious showers. Hari takes in every *yuga* birth as a Siddha, a *rishi* or a master-yogi and propagates Jñāna, Karma or Yoga in the respective roles. In the form of the Patriarchs He multiplies the race. As King, He destroys the depredators. And as time, the destroyer, possessed of diverse qualities, He brings about the destruction of all creatures. Described variously in different revelations (*Śāstras*) by men who are taken in by His *Māyā*, which manifests itself as name and form, He is actually perceived by none. I have now told you of the duration of a *Vikalpa* (sub-division of a Kalpa), which, according to the historians, comprises the fourteen Manvantaras (2-11).

CHAPTER XV

BALI OUSTS INDRA AS RULER OF HEAVEN

The King asked : ' Why did Hari beg of Bali earth covered by three paces, as if He were indigent, though He is the Paramount Lord ? And having secured His object, why did He put him in bonds ? I am extremely eager to know how it came to pass that the Lord of the Sacrifice, Who is perfect, should have begged and then put in bonds one who had committed no sin' (1-2).

Śrī Suka said : Since Bali, defeated and deprived of all his prosperity and life by Indra, had been restored to life by the Bhṛguṣ, the generous pupil was devoted to them heart and soul, and propitiated them by bestowing on them all that they could desire. The Bhṛguṣ, eminent Brahmanas, who were pleased with him, consecrated him, according to the Sāstra, by giving him the great bath prescribed for him who would be Indra, since he wished to conquer heaven ; and then conducted the Viśvajit sacrifice for him. From the fire in which sacrificial oblations were made, rose a chariot, plated with gold, with horses of the same hue as that of the horses that bear Indra, and a flag adorned with the figure of a lion ; also a celestial bow, embellished with gold, two exhaustless quivers, and a celestial armour. His grandfather (Prahlaḍa) gave him an unfading garland and Sukra a conch. Being thus furnished with battle-equipment secured for him by the Brahmanas, and having got them to pronounce blessings on him, he circumambulated them in all reverence and prostrated himself before them. Then, making his reverence to Prahlaḍa, he took leave of him ; and he, the mighty charioteer, got into the celestial chariot procured for him by the Bhṛguṣ. Wearing a beautiful garland, clad in armour, armed with bow and sword, and carrying his quivers, he, with his arms adorned with gold armlets, and his fish-shaped ear-pendants flashing, shone in his chariot like fire in the fire-pit. Accompanied by the great Daitya Chieftains, who were equal to him in splendour, strength and opulence, and who looked as if they would drink up the skies and burn the four quarters with their looks, the powerful warrior led a

great army against Indra's prosperous capital city, shaking earth and heaven, as it were (3-11).

That city was delightful with its sumptuous woods and pleasure-gardens such as Nandana, filled with crooning birds in pairs and drunken bees humming, and with celestial trees whose branches were heavy with the burden of tender shoots, fruit and flower ; there were lotus pools there, to which flocked swans, *sāras* cranes, *chakra-vākas* and *kārandavas*, and in them sported beautiful young women attended by the gods. That city, fashioned by Viśvakarmā, was encircled by the celestial Gangā as by a moat and lofty ramparts of gold blazing like fire, and provided with watch-towers. It had doorways with doors encased in sheeted gold and *gopura* gateways of crystal. Wide and well-aligned thoroughfares, courtyards and assembly halls and roads adorned it. There were numberless mansions in it, and its crossways, paved with brilliants, had raised seats of coral and diamond. Women who, with their eternal youth and beauty, look always like girls of sixteen, and are clad in spotless raiment and adorned with jewels, shine there like tongues of flame. In the streets the wind wafts the perfume of the wreaths of fresh-blown white lilies fallen from the tresses of the celestial damsels. The women, who are the favourites of the gods, walk along streets which are hidden from view by the fragrant, whitish smoke of burning aloes that issues through golden casements. There were to be seen everywhere canopies of pearl, flagstaffs made of gold and encrusted with gems, and balconies adorned with a variety of buntings. It resounded with the cries of peacock and pigeon and the hum of bees and the auspicious and sweet songs of the women in the mansions. It captivated the mind with the booming of *mṛdanga*, the sounds of conch and kettle-drum, the music of *vīṇā* and tambourine, *ṛṣṭi*, and flute, and cymbals, the dances with their musical accompaniments, and the singing of the demigods ; and it out-dazzled all other luminous objects. That city is never gained by men wedded to unrighteousness or by blackguards, those who are guilty of cruelty to living creatures, or wicked, proud, licentious or avaricious men, while those who are free from such blemishes attain it (12-22).

The leader of the (invading) army invested the capital city of the gods with his forces on all sides. And he blew a mighty blare on the conch his preceptor had given him, rousing fear in the hearts of Indra's women. Indra, realizing that this was an all-out effort made by Bali (to oust him), waited on his preceptor, attended by the hosts of the gods, and said to him, 'This is a far more powerful attack than any previous one planned by our old enemy Bali. It seems irresistible to me. How has he become so strong? No one can withstand this attack or lead a counter-attack from anywhere. It has come upon us like the conflagration at the dissolution of the worlds, drinking up with its mouth the ten directions as it were, and smacking its lips, and burning them with its looks. Please tell me how my enemy became so formidable and wherefrom he got the vital and mental energy, physical strength and power, which have enabled him to launch this attack' (23-27).

His Guru told him, 'I know, O Maghavā, the cause of your foe's attaining this exalted position. The Bhṛguṣ, well-versed in the Vedas, have infused into their pupil their own spiritual energy. Neither you nor anyone like you, none in fact except Hari, the Supreme Lord, can make a stand against him, any more than men can stand up to death. Therefore, vacating heaven, you had better go, all of you, into hiding, and bide your time, which will be when the enemy's star sinks. He is benefiting in an ever-increasing degree from the strength of the Brahmanas, and his power is now at its height. It is by treating them with disrespect that he and his supporters will perish' (28-31).

Thus advised by their preceptor, who knew what was the proper thing to do at any time, the gods, who could take any form at will, abandoned heaven and went away. When the gods had disappeared, Bali, the son of Virochana, occupied the capital city of the gods and brought the three worlds under his control. The Bhṛguṣ, who loved their disciple, conducted a hundred horse sacrifices for him, who had conquered all the world. The greatness these sacrifices won for him spread his fame, already known to the three worlds, in all the ten directions, and he shone like the moon. Having realized,

as it seemed, the summit of his ambition, he enjoyed the affluence secured for him by the Brahmanas (32-36).

CHAPTER XVI

THE PAYOVRATA RITE

Srī Suka said : When her sons had disappeared, and the Daityas had captured heaven, Aditi, mother of the gods, grieved like one forlorn. Once the blessed Kaśyapa, rising up from prolonged *samādhi*, went to her hermitage, which was cheerless, with none of its usual festive air about it. Duly welcomed, he took his seat, and questioned his woebegone wife, O first of the Kurus. 'I trust, good dame, that no evil has befallen Brahmanas, or Dharma, or the world of mortals, who are in the hands of death. Has there occurred anything detrimental to the realization of Dharma, Artha and Kāma in your household, good housewife? The domestic life (properly managed) may bring the fruits of yoga even to those who are not yogis. Did it ever happen that those who came as guests went away unwelcomed, without being shown by you, in your preoccupation with domestic cares, even such common courtesies as going forward to meet them? Those houses which visitors leave without being offered even a cup of water are no better than jackals' lairs. Did you fail on any occasion to offer oblations into the fire at the proper hours, O faithful wife, because you were feeling depressed in my absence? It is by that worship that the householder attains the worlds where he has all his wishes fulfilled. For the Brahmanas and fire are the mouths of Vishnu, Who is the soul of all the gods. Are all your children well, courageous dame? You are unquiet, by your looks' (1-10).

Aditi replied : 'All is well with the Brahmanas and the cows, with Dharma and all who live here, O Brahman. And in this house, O master of the household, the three objects of human endeavour are being amply fulfilled. The sacred fires, guests, servants, mendicants and all others who come wanting anything are stinted nothing. Nothing is lacking here, since my thoughts are ever with you, O Brahman, blessed soul. How could I fail to

get anything that I desire, when I have such an adviser as you, O Patriarch, to expound my duties to me ? (11-13).

'All created beings, whether *sāttvic*, *rājasic*, or *tāmasic*, are your children, born of your mind or of your loins, O son of Marīchi. And you, O blessed one, look with an equal eye on all of them, Asuras and others. But even the Supreme Lord is partial to His devotee. Therefore you, who can, should consider how you may promote my good, devoted to you as I am, O virtuous one. Protect us, my lord, whose prosperity and places have been usurped by our rivals. Driven into exile and deprived of our home and sovereign power, affluence and renown, by enemies possessing superior strength, we are plunged in an ocean of misery. Good my lord, you who are princely in your beneficence, should think and devise some fair expedient whereby my sons may recover their fortunes' (14-17).

Thus requested by Aditi, the Patriarch replied in marvelling accents, 'Ah, how wonderful, the power of Vishnu's *Māyā*, which holds the world together by the ties of affection ! What a yawning gap there is between this material body, which is other than the soul, and the *Ātman*, which is totally distinct from *Prakṛti*. Who is related to whom as husband, son and so on ? Is not delusion the sole cause of such attachments ? Well, worship the Lord Janārdana, the Spirit Who dwells in the hearts of all creatures. Worship Him, Vāsudeva, the World-teacher. Hari, Who has compassion for those who suffer, will grant you your wish. Devotion to the exalted Lord never goes in vain ; not so, I am certain, the devotion given to other deities' (18-21).

Aditi asked him, 'In what manner shall I set about worshipping the Lord of the universe, O Brahman, so that He, Whose will is truth, may grant me my wish ? Instruct me, O best of Brahmanas, in the mode of worship which will make the Lord quickly pleased with me, who suffer with my beloved children' (22-23).

Kāsyapa told her, 'Requested in this behalf by me from the desire for progeny, the exalted Lord, the Lotus-born, taught me the ritual practice by which Keśava may be propitiated, and you shall learn it from me. In the bright fortnight of the month of Phalguṇa, he

who undertakes this vow shall worship the Lord of the lotus eyes for twelve days with supreme devotion, subsisting solely on milk. On the new moon day (previous to this fortnight), he shall rub himself with mud thrown up by a wild boar's rooting, if it is available, and bathe in a running stream, uttering the following incantation : "Thou, O goddess, wert lifted up from Rasātala by the Primordial Boar Who wanted a stable resting place for all creatures. I make my salutations to Thee, be pleased to destroy my sins." After finishing his daily observances, he should worship the Lord with one-pointed devotion in an image or in consecrated ground, in the sun, in water, in fire or in his Guru, uttering the following prayer, "I make my salutations to Thee, exalted Lord That art greater than the greatest, the Lord Vāsudeva, the Home of all creatures and the Witness in their hearts. I salute Thee That art too subtle to be seen, That art the worlds of the gross and the subtle, That art Pradhāna and Purusha, That knowest the twenty-four categories and hast propagated the Sāṅkhya Sāstra. I make my salutations to Him, the Lord of the Sacrifice, with the two heads, the three feet, the four horns, and the seven hands; to the Dispenser of the fruits of the sacrifice; to Him Whose essence is to be found in the Vedas. I make my salutations to Him Who is Siva and Rudra and the Wielder of all powers, Who is the Master of all lores and the Overlord of all elementals. I make my salutations to Thee that art Hiraṇyagarbha and the Sūtrātmā, That art the Soul of the universe, being the embodiment of the might and majesty won by yoga, and art Thyself the source of yoga. My salutations to Thee That art the Primordial Lord and the Witness in all creatures, to Thee, Hari, That art incarnate as the sage Narayana and Nara. I make my salutations to Thee, Keśava of the emerald hue, clad in yellow silks, with Whom the Goddess Śrī abides eternally. Thou art the granter of all boons to mortals, O Lord That art the most prized of all goals, and the foremost of the Lords of bounty ; that is why wise men worship the dust of Thy feet. May the exalted Lord, on Whom the gods and Śrī Herself attend as if they were eager to enjoy the scent of His lotus feet, be propitious to me " (24-27).

‘Having invoked Hṛshīkeśa with these *mantras*, the worshipper should offer *arghya*, *pādyā* and *āchamana*, sandal, flowers and so on, and then bathe the Lord with milk and invest Him with fresh raiment and sacred thread. Having done that, he should again offer Him *pādyā*, *arghya*, *āchamana*, sandal paste and incense, uttering the *mantra* of the twelve syllables. He who can afford it should offer rice boiled in milk with ghee and jaggery, and then make oblations of the same in the fire, reciting the twelve-syllabled *mantra*. He should give the remnants of the consecrated food to some devotee of the Lord, or he may eat it himself. Having given water for *āchamana* and waved lights before the Lord, he should offer betel leaves, recite the twelve-syllabled *mantra* one hundred and eight times and extol the Lord with hymns of praise. Then, circumambulating Him with joy in his heart, he should make his prostration to Him, falling down on the ground like a stick. And placing on his own head the flowers that had been offered Him, he should restore the Lord to His place of rest, and feed at least two Brahmanas, offering them milk broth, if his circumstances permit. When they have been duly honoured, he may eat of the remnants with their permission along with his friends and well-wishers (38-44).

‘Spending that night in strict continence, he should bathe early next morning, and on that first day of the bright fortnight offer worship in the same way as described already, observing ritual purity, and with his mind under control. He should thus carry on for the duration of the vow. Sustaining himself wholly on milk, he should worship Vishnu with all devoutness, making oblations in the fire and feeding Brahmanas, for twelve days continuously. And from the first to the thirteenth day of the bright fortnight, he should observe strict continence, sleep on the bare ground and bathe thrice a day. He should eschew profane talk and evil company, as well as all creature comforts and pleasures. Entirely devoted to Narayana, he should refrain from the least harm to any creature. On the thirteenth day of the fortnight, he should have the Lord Vishnu bathed in *pañchāmṛta* according to the rules by

those well-versed in them. And he should, without parsimony, offer elaborate worship to Vishnu. He should get ready a special *charu* to be offered to *Sipivishṭa*, a rice offering boiled in ghee and milk. Of this he should make oblations in the fire with his mind under control. He should offer to the Lord also such other sumptuous food as would be pleasing to Him. With presents of raiment, ornaments and cows, he should propitiate the Āchārya, who should be a man of learning and enlightenment, and the officiating priests. That would be the highest satisfaction one could give to Hari. They should be given pure and tasty food, and according to his means, other Brahmanas who might come there should also be fed, O lady of the pleasing smile. He should pay fees to the Guru and the priests according to their worth, and propitiate all who might happen to be there, not excepting even the eaters of dogs' flesh, with food, sweets, and so on. When all of them, including the destitute and the miserable and those who are blind, have been fed—for that is what would be most acceptable to Vishnu—he may eat along with his relations. The Lord should be offered worship every day to the accompaniment of dance, music and song, the singing of hymns of praise, and the invoking of benedictions, as well as the recital of stories dwelling on the Lord's glory (45-57).

'This vow named *Payovrata*, which I have described to you, and which is the highest kind of worship that may be offered to the Lord, was communicated to me by Brahmā. You, O fortunate one, should propitiate, with a collected mind and a pure heart, the Lord everlasting, Keśava, by offering this worship with scrupulous fidelity. This vow is spoken of, good lady, as "all-the-sacrifices"; it is regarded as comprising in itself all the vows; it represents the essence of austerities and penance, and is regarded as the gift that is most acceptable to the Lord. The highest among external and internal disciplines, the truest of austerities and the best of gifts, vows and sacrifices, are those with which Adhokshaja is well pleased. Therefore, good dame, observe these vows with all reverence and faith. The Lord, well pleased with you, will fulfil your wishes forthwith' (58-62).

CHAPTER XVII

THE LORD'S PROMISE TO ADITI

Srī Suka said : Thus instructed by her husband Kāśyapa, Aditi observed that vow of twelve days' duration diligently, O King. She performed the Payovrata with a steady will, her mind fixed on the Supreme Lord, Mahāvishnu. Her intellect, as the charioteer, kept in strict check those unruly horses, the senses, with the mind, which was the reins as it were, and she concentrated her attention with an inflexible will on the exalted Lord, Vāsudeva, the Inner Ruler in all creatures. To her appeared, my son, the exalted Lord, the First Cause, clad in yellow silks, with four arms, and carrying the conch, the discus and the mace. The moment she saw Him with her own eyes, she jumped up joyously and made her prostrations, throwing herself down on the ground before Him in a perfect fever of love. Then she got up and stood before Him with folded hands from the desire to praise Him, but could not. With tears of bliss welling up, she remained silent, her body athrill with the joy of setting eyes upon Him. However, the goddess, slowly recovering herself, began praising Hari, O first of the Kurus, in a voice choked with emotion, as she looked at the Spouse of Rāmā, the Lord of the sacrifice and the Master of the universe, as if she would drink Him up with her eyes (1-7).

Aditi said : ' O Lord That art the Soul of the sacrifice and the Dispenser of its fruits, O Achyuta, Whose feet sanctify, Whose fame ferries one over the sea of *samsāra*, Whose name brings all blessings to him who hears it, O Lord Who art incarnate for dispelling the sufferings of those who take refuge in Thee, O Primordial and Paramount Lord, may Thou prosper us, for Thou art the Protector of the humble and the lowly. I make my salutations to Thee, O Lord That comprehendest all that is, O Hari That art the universe, That takest to Thyself of Thy free will the *guṇas* of Māyā for the creation, preservation and destruction of the worlds, but art Thyself established in Thine integrity, the darkness of Māyā being ever unable to prevail against Thee because of the plenary Consciousness that

is in Thee eternally. O Lord Everlasting, if Thou art pleased with one, Thou grantest him longevity as great as Brahmā's, a body that is most to his liking, unequalled prosperity, sovereignty over heaven, earth and the lower regions, all the supernatural attributes obtained by yoga, and the realization of the three ends of life, as well as pure enlightenment. How small a thing, then, it should be for Thee to grant one victory over one's enemies and the like !' (8-10).

Srī Suka said : Thus extolled by Aditi, O King, the exalted Lord of the lotus eyes, the Inner Ruler in all creatures, answered her thus, O son of the Bharatas. The Lord said : ' I know, O mother of the gods, what you have long desired for your sons, who have been deprived of their wealth and possessions and driven away from their homes by their enemies. You wish to live with your sons, when they have vanquished the arrogant Asura chiefs in battle and are victorious and opulent again. You wish to return to your place and see the women of the enemy weeping over the death of their spouses slain by your sons headed by Indra, the eldest. You wish to see your sons, restored to heaven, enjoying themselves, having recovered their prosperity, fame and splendour. I think, O Goddess, that at present it would be exceedingly difficult to overcome the great chiefs of the Asura forces. Since they are protected by friendly and capable Brahmanas, any attempt to dislodge them by force will not be productive of any good. But I am pleased with your scrupulous observance of these vows, and I must think of some expedient. Worship offered to Me should not be fruitless ; it always brings the worshipper what he desires. Since you have offered Me worthy worship by observing the Payovrata, and singing My praises, from the desire to secure My protection for your sons, I shall be incarnate as your son with a fraction of Myself, basing Myself on Mārīcha's austerities, and protect your sons. Go to your husband, the flawless Patriarch, O faithful spouse, and devote yourself to him, thinking of Me as present in him in this form. You should speak of this to no one, even if questioned ; the secret designs of the gods, if well-guarded, are duly fulfilled' (11-20).

Srī Suka said : The Lord, having said this, disappeared instantly. Aditi, having been granted the rare privilege of mothering an incarnation of the Lord, felt supremely content, and waited upon her husband with great devotion. And Kāśyapa knew, with the unerring insight that comes from yogic *samādhi*, that the Lord had entered his mind with a fraction of Himself. And with a collected mind, he transmitted to Aditi the power that he had long conserved by the practice of austerities, as the wind ignites the forest trees (21-23).

Hiraṇyagarbha (Brahmā), knowing that the eternal Lord had entered Aditi's womb, extolled Him by reciting His secret names. Brahmā said : ' Victory to Thee, O Lord that art much sung. Salutations to Thee Whose prowess is great. Salutations to Thee, the Lord That loveth the Brahmanas, to Thee That controllest the three *guṇas*. Salutations to Thee That wert incarnate as Pṛśnigarbha ; That art revealed by the Vedas ; That art the Creator of the worlds ; That hast the three worlds in Thy navel, and at the same time transcendest them ; salutations to Thee That hast entered all creatures as their Inner Ruler, and art Vishnu too, the all-pervading. Thou, Whom the Vedas describe as the Lord of the infinite power, art the beginning, the middle and the end of the worlds. Thou, O Lord, art time that sweeps away all creatures as a swelling flood carries off whatever falls into it. Thou art verily the Creator of all creatures, moving and non-moving, and of the Patriarchs. Thou art the Saviour of the gods who have fallen from heaven, O Lord, as a ship is of men who are drowning ' (24-28).

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LORD IS INCARNATE AS VĀMANA

Srī Suka said : The Lord, Who does not know mortal birth, thus extolled by Virinchi for His exploits and prowess, was incarnate as the son of Aditi, with four arms, carrying the conch, the mace, the lotus and the discus ; clad in yellow silks, and with eyes that were long like lotus petals. The Supreme Lord Hari, dark-hued, His gracious face lit up by the brilliance of the fish-

shaped ear-pendants, had the Śrīvatsa mark on His breast, and was adorned with bracelets, armlets, a glittering crown, girdle and lovely anklets ; and His splendour was set off by the garland of sylvan flowers which drew swarms of humming bees as He, with the Kausthubha jewel on His neck, dispelled by His radiance the darkness in the house of the Patriarch. The four quarters were serene and bright, the waters ran clear, all creatures rejoiced, the seasons were abundantly fruitful ; earth and heaven and the upper air, the gods, the cows, the Brahmanas, and the mountains were in high feather. On the twelfth day of the bright fortnight of the Bhādrapada month, when the moon was in the constellation Śravaṇa, and in the *abhijit muhūrta*, the Lord appeared on earth. And all the fixed stars, the planets, and so on, exalted that natal hour. The twelfth day of the fortnight, which witnessed the Lord's incarnation in daytime, when the sun was at the meridian, is spoken of as 'Vijaya', O King (1-6).

Conch and drum, big and small, *mṛdanga*, and *paṇava*, struck up, and there was heard the swelling harmony produced by a variety of wind and stringed instruments. The delighted Apsarases danced, the great Gandharvas sang. The sages, the gods, the Manus, the manes, the fires, the hosts of Siddhas and Vidyādhara, and the Kimpurushas and Kinnaras, the Chāraṇas, the Yakshas and Rākshasas, the eagles and the great serpents, extolled the Lord. All the demigods sang and danced and praised the Lord in the highest terms, as they showered flowers on the hermitage grounds of Aditi (7-10)

Aditi, seeing the Supreme Lord born of her womb, taking a body by means of His own Māyā, was filled with wonder and delight. And the Patriarch marvelled, as he cried, 'Victory to Thee !' From that very form, which was distinguished by its effulgence, as well as by the ornaments He wore and the weapons He carried, He, Whose essential form is that *chit* which is beyond the reach of the senses, changed, like an actor, before the eyes of the beholders, into a dwarfish Brahmana boy by means of His marvellous power. The great sages, who saw Him as a diminutive young boy, were delighted, and they conducted for him the appro-

priate sacraments under the leadership of the Patriarch. When he was invested with the sacred thread, Savitā taught him the Gāyatrī *mantra*, Bṛhaspati gave him the sacred thread and Kaśyapa the grass girdle. The earth gave him the skin of the black antelope, the moon-god, the lord of vegetation, gave him his staff; his mother gave him a cod-piece and a loin-cloth, while the goddess of the sky gave an umbrella to the Master of the worlds. Brahmā gave him a water pot and the seven sages *kuśa* grass, while Sarasvatī gave Him of the imperishable essence that knows no wane, a garland of beads. When he was thus invested with the sacred thread, the sovereign of the Yakshas gave him the begging bowl, and the great Goddess Umā Herself, the Mother of the universe and the model of faithful wives, gave him his first alms. Thus honoured, that neophyte of unparalleled greatness outshone by his Brāhmic splendour every one in that assembly of Brahmarshis. Heaping up the fuel and igniting the sacred fire and surrounding it with twigs, the Brahmana worshipped it and then offered the sacred twigs in it (11-19).

Hearing that Bali, who was firmly established in his strength, was worshipping the Lord by performing horse sacrifices conducted for him by the Bhṛgu, he in whom was gathered all strength, proceeded there, making the earth dip under his tread by his weight. The Bhṛgu, and the priests who were conducting for Bali the great sacrifice on the northern bank of the Narmadā at the sacred spot called Bhṛgu-kaccha, beheld him, who seemed like the sun rising close by. Those priests, the sacrificer and the members of the assembly, who were all eclipsed by the splendour of Vāmana, wondered, O King, whether it might be the sun-god, or the god of fire, or Sanatkumāra coming to see the sacrifice (20-22).

While the Bhṛgu and their disciple were thus speculating, the exalted Lord as Vāmana entered the sacrificial hall carrying his umbrella, staff and full water pot. As they gazed on Hari Who entered the hall, disguised as a Brahmana student with matted hair, wearing the girdle of *munja* grass and the skin of the black antelope, worn like the sacred thread, for upper garment, the Bhṛgu,

diminished by his splendour, stood up along with their disciple and the sacred fires, and received him with all honours. The sacrificer, delighted to see him who captivated the mind by his comeliness and whose limbs were perfectly proportioned to his size, offered him a seat. Welcoming him with all courtesy, Bali bathed the feet of the Lord, Who ravishes the minds of those who have abjured all attachments, and worshipped them. He who knew Dharma, placed on his own head the water purified by the touch of those feet, that all-auspicious water which dispels the sins of the worlds, and which even the God of gods, the Lord of the Hills, the Wearer of the Moony Crest, had received on His head with ecstatic devotion (23-28).

Bali said to him, 'Welcome to you, O Brahmana, I make my prostrations to you. What can I do for you? I look upon you, noble sir, as none other than the austerities of the Brahmana sages, come here taking a material form. This day our manes have been propitiated, our race has been sanctified, and this sacrifice has attained its culmination, since you have come to our house. This day the sacrificial fires I maintain have received proper oblations according to the rules, O son of the Brahmana, and this place of mine, who have been purified of my sins by the water that has washed your feet, has been made holy by the imprint of your tiny feet. Ask of me whatsoever you want, O student. I believe, O son of the Brahmana, that you have come to me as a petitioner. You can have from me anything you want—cows, gold, a sumptuous house, delectable food and drink, a young maid, prosperous villages, horses, elephants or chariots' (29-32).

CHAPTER XIX

VĀMANA OBTAINS BALI'S PROMISE

Srī Suka said : Delighted with the righteous, sincere and pleasing words of the son of Virochana, the Lord commended them and answered him thus. The Lord said : 'These words of yours, O King, are pleasing in their sincerity. They breathe righteousness and are bound to bring you fame. They are fully worthy of

one of your race, for whom the Bhrgus set the standard in worldly matters, and the revered head of your family, Prahlāda, who has won equipoise, does the same in regard to the duties that secure one's welfare in the other world. In this family there has been none so pusillanimous that he would refuse what any Brahmana begged of him, or so mean that, having made a promise, he would not fulfil it. In your family, wherein shines Prahlāda by his spotless fame like the moon in the sky, there have never been kings, who, lacking in generosity, were unresponsive to the call of charity when approached by those in need, or, lacking in courage, would not face the challenge of the foe to battle. In your family was born Hiranyāksha, who traversed the earth armed with the mace, in the course of his world conquest, and found no one who could stand up to him. It was with great difficulty that Vishnu overcame him when He encountered him while engaged in lifting up the earth, and even then was not inclined to plume Himself on His victory, recollecting how stupendous had been the fight he had put up. His brother Hiranyakāśipu, who was in a rage on hearing of his death, went to Hari's abode to slay Him, Who had killed his brother. Seeing him coming along armed with the spear like death itself, Vishnu, foremost of the masters of stratagem and one who knew when the moment was opportune for any effort, said to Himself, 'Wherever I go, there he too is to be found, as death is found wherever men are ; therefore, I shall hide in his heart, since his gaze is always turned outward.' Having thus resolved, He entered the heart of His enemy, when the latter pounced upon Him; taking a subtle form, He entered his body through his nose, along with his breath, His heart quaking within Him as he did so. Searching His abode and finding it empty, he roared in his rage. The valiant one, though he sought Vishnu everywhere on earth and in heaven, in the upper air and in all the quarters, in the underworlds, and the seas, could not find Him. Not seeing Him, he said, 'I have searched all the world. The slayer of my brother has assuredly gone to that place (of the dead) whence no one returns.' Enmity between mortals lasts only so long as life lasts. Likewise does anger

bred by ignorance in men who love the body as if it were the Self (1-13).

'Your father, the son of Prahlāda, who loved the Brahmanas, gave up his life at the instance of the gods because they came to him disguised as Brahmanas, though he knew that they were gods. And you yourself follow the Dharmas of the householder practised by Brahmanas, by your heroic ancestors and others of limitless fame. Therefore, I ask you, famed as the granter of all boons, for a little plot of earth, just three paces in length, measured by my feet. I want nothing else from you, O King, bountiful master of the worlds as you are. The wise man incurs no sin by accepting just what he requires and nothing more' (14-17).

Bali replied, 'O scion of the Brahmanas, you speak such words as men old in wisdom would approve. But you are a child and are childish in your understanding, for you do not know your own interest. He who, having propitiated by his words me, the sole monarch of all the worlds, who would give away continents to those who ask for them, asks for nothing more than three paces of earth, is wanting in sense. No-one who has solicited a favour of me should find it necessary to go to another with a similar request. Therefore, boy, ask of me freely for as much land as would provide you with a living' (18-20).

The Lord told him, 'All the desirable things that are to be found in the three worlds will not satisfy him who has not controlled his senses, O King. He who is not content with the space covered by three steps will not be content even if given the entire island-continent, with its nine divisions; he will hanker after all the continents. We have heard that the kings who ruled over the seven continents, the son of Vena, Gaya and the rest, were not satisfied with the wealth and pleasures they enjoyed. The man who is content with what comes to him by chance is happy; not he who, having failed to control his mind, would be discontented even with the three worlds. The man who is not content with the wealth and enjoyments that are his, is bound for the transmigratory travail. Satisfaction with what comes to one without effort is regarded as the way to liberation.

The effulgence of the Brahmana who is content with what he gets grows day by day ; discontent blots it out, as water puts out fire. Therefore I shall ask only for as much earth as is covered by three steps, of you, foremost of the granters of boons. My purpose will be amply served by that. Where wealth is concerned enough is enough' (21-27).

Thus told, he replied laughing, 'Take whatever you want'. And he took in his hand the vessel containing water, with a view to granting Vāmana the plot of earth he wanted. The omniscient Uśanas, who knew Vishnu's purpose, spoke to the ruler of the Asuras, when he was about to gift that plot to Vishnu. Śukra told him, 'This, O son of Virochana, is no other than the exalted and imperishable Lord Vishnu, Who was born as the son of Kāśyapa and Aditi, resolved upon securing the objects of the gods. What you have promised Him unwittingly, not realizing the harm it will do, is wrong. The Daityas are in for great suffering, due to this injustice. Here is Hari, come in the guise of a neophyte, to deprive you of your position, sovereign power, opulence, splendour and world-wide fame and give it all to Sakra. Taking a form as big as the universe, He will cover the three worlds with His three steps. Having given away all that you possess to Vishnu, how will you live, you fool? When the all-pervading Lord covers the entire earth with one step, heaven with the second, and the upper air with His huge body, what happens to His third step? As one who has failed to keep his word, you will find permanent lodgement in hell, I have no doubt about it ; for it will be beyond your power to make good your word. That gift is not commended, which would mean the loss of one's livelihood. Only for him who has the means to support himself would it be possible to make gifts, offer sacrifices, practise concentration of mind, or execute works of charity. The man who divides his wealth into five parts and devotes them to the pursuit of Dharma, the gaining of renown, the increase of his wealth, the satisfaction of his desires and the propitiation of his own folk, is happy here and hereafter. Pertinent to this question is a verse in the Rg-Veda ; this is how it goes, O foremost of the Asuras.

“What is solemnly agreed to is truth. When that is denied, by saying “No”, it is untruth. You should know that truth is the fruit and flower of that tree which is the living¹ body. But if the tree itself did not exist, there would be neither fruit nor flower. Untruth is thus the root of the living tree that is the body. As the tree that has been uprooted dries up and falls down before long, the body, which is not sustained by untruth, will shrivel up without a doubt. When a man says “yea”, that “yea”, takes his wealth away from him. He who promises a petitioner that he will give him what he wants, becomes poorer to that extent. And if he tells him that he will give him all he has, he will not be able to satisfy his own wants. Whereas he who says “No”, telling an untruth, remains full (that is, retains all he has) and, further, draws to himself others’ wealth too. But, if he refuses to give anything whatsoever, he gains infamy and, though he continues to breathe, is as good as dead. It is not disgraceful to tell a lie to women, or in jest; to bring about a marriage, to keep oneself from starving, to save one’s life, or for the sake of the Brahmana or the cow, or to save anybody from violence’ (28-43).

CHAPTER XX

THE LORD COVERS THE THREE WORLDS

Srī Suka said : Thus advised by his family preceptor, Bali, the sacrificer, was silent for a moment, and then replied to his Guru with composure. Bali said : ‘ You, honoured sir, have correctly expounded the Dharma incumbent on the householder, as that which is not detrimental to his material interest, his enjoyment, his reputation or his livelihood. But how could the descendant of Prahlāda turn away a Brahmana from his door from covetousness, like any common cheat, having promised to give him what he wanted ? Did not the earth say, “ There is assuredly no greater unrighteousness than untruth. I think it is possible to put up with anything except the man who is given to lying ”. I fear neither hell, nor destitution, nor endless

¹ ‘Jivatah’ (living) is the reading preferred by S. and R. to the otiose ‘geeyate’ (which means ‘so say the Vedas’).

misery, neither fall from my position, nor death itself, as I do deceiving a Brahmana. Wealth and all other possessions leave a man when he dies. (Why then should he not himself give it away?) And if a Brahmana is not satisfied with what is given, what is the point in giving it? Good men like Dadichi and Sibi do what is good and pleasing to living beings, even if it means sacrificing their own lives, which it is so hard to give up; how little, then, would they hesitate about giving up land or other possessions? Time, no doubt, put an end to the enjoyments that were those of great Asura kings who never retreated from the field of battle and who in their time ruled the earth; but it could not eclipse the fame they won in this world. It is easy to find, O Brahmana sage, men who do not retire from the field of battle but lay down their lives there; not so easy to find those who would give away their wealth with ardent faith when a worthy recipient comes. If a generous giver, moved by compassion, reduces himself to distress by satisfying the wants of any petitioner, whoever he might be, that is all to his credit; how much more so if the petitioners are those who, like you, know the Brahma? Therefore, I shall give this boy-neophyte what he wants. If Vishnu Himself has come here—He whom the like of you, who are well-versed in the ritual laid down by the Veda, propitiate with the offering of sacrifices with or without *soma* offerings—I shall give Him the land He wants, O sage, whether He has come to grant me a boon, or whether He has come as a foe. Even if He should unrighteously bind me, who am innocent, I shall not do violence to the enemy who, out of fear, has taken the guise of a Brahmana. If He is the illustrious Lord, and does not wish to forfeit His good name; He will slay me in battle and take the empire of the world from me, or He will lie slain on the battlefield' (1-13).

Sri Suka said: When His disciple did not give due regard to what his Guru said and did not do as he directed, the teacher, egged on by Providence, cursed him, who was wedded to truth and possessed of courage. 'You are without a doubt a conceited fool, thinking yourself wise. Since you do not care for my advice and

reject it, you shall ere long forfeit your prosperity' (14-15).

Though thus cursed by his Guru, that great Asura would not swerve from the truth. Worshipping Vāmana he gave him the earth he promised, pouring water into his hand. His wife Vindhyāvali, wearing a necklace of pearls, came there with a golden vessel filled with water for washing the feet. The sacrificer himself washed those blessed feet with all joy and sprinkled on his head that water which sanctifies all the world. Thereupon even the companies of gods assembled in heaven, the Gandharvas, Vidyādhara, Siddhas and Chāraṇas extolled that act of his and his integrity, and they gladly showered him with flowers. Thousands of kettle-drums boomed again and again; the Gandharvas, Kimpuruṣas and Kinnaras sang the praises of that generous soul for doing what no one else could have done, giving away to the foe (knowing it was the foe) the sovereignty of the three worlds (16-20).

Thereupon that form of a dwarf which the Lord Hari, the Infinite, had taken, and in which was the world composed of the three *guṇas*, began growing and swelling in a marvellous manner, and in it were to be seen the earth, the sky, the four quarters, heaven, the nether worlds, the oceans, the lower creation, men, gods and sages. Bali, along with his priests, his preceptor and the members of his assembly, saw the universe constituted of the *guṇas* lodged in that body, which displayed all the glorious attributes of the Lord of the tremendous powers, along with the gross elements, the organs of sensation and action, their objects, the inner organ and the *jīva*. Indrasena (Bali) saw Rasātala in the soles of the Lord's feet, the earth in His feet, the mountains in His shanks, the birds in the knees of the Lord in His cosmic form, and the whole body of the winds in His thighs. He saw the twilights in the all-pervading Lord's garment, the Patriarchs in His secret parts, himself along with the great Asura chiefs in His loins, the firmament in His navel, the seven seas in the cavities of His abdomen, and the garland of stars on the breast of the Lord of the immense strides. He saw Dharma in the heart of Murāri, my dear, Rta and Satya in His nipples, the

moon-god in His mind, the Goddess Sṛī, with the lotus in her hand, on His bosom, and in His throat the Sāman chants and the entire body of articulate sounds. He saw Indra and the gods in His arms, the quarters in His ears, heaven in His head, the clouds in His hair, air in His nostrils, the sun in His eyes and fire in His mouth. He saw the Vedas in the speech of the Supreme Lord, the Lord of the waters (Varuṇa) in His palate, rule and prohibition in His eyebrows, night and day in His eyelashes, anger in His forehead, and covetousness in His lower lip. He saw passion in His touch, O King, water in His semen, Adharma in His back, the sacrifice wherever His feet rested, death in His shadow, Māyā in His laughter, all vegetation in the hair on His body. The heroic one beheld the rivers in His arteries, the rocks in His nails, Aja in His intellect, the gods and the sages in His organs of sense and action, and the entire creation, moving and non-moving, in His body (21-29).

Seeing the universe in the Lord, Who is the support of all that exists, the Asuras were plunged in despair, my dear. The discus Sudarsana of the irresistible power, the bow Sārṅga whose twanging was like thunder from a cloudless sky, the conch Pāṇchajanya, which boomed like the rumbling of the rain-cloud, the mace of Viṣṇu, the swift and powerful Kaumodakī, the sword Vidyādhara with its scabbard on which were engraved a hundred moons, and two splendid quivers, filled with arrows, that were never exhausted, and Sunanda and other principal personal attendants of the Supreme Lord, waited upon Him, as well as the Guardians of the worlds. The Lord of the immense strides shone, O King, in the glory of dazzling crown and shoulder-rings, fish-shaped ear-pendants, the Srīvatsa mark, the priceless jewel (Kaushtubha), the girdle and the lovely raiment, and the garland of wild flowers with its attendant rows of bees. He covered Bali's earth with one step, the firmament with His body, the four quarters with His arms; and when with a fraction of His second step He had covered heaven, His foot went up higher and higher, passing beyond the Mahar-, Jana-, and Tapo-lokas, and there was not an atom of space which Bali could call his own, that could be covered by a third step (30-34).

CHAPTER XXI

BALI PUT IN CHAINS

Sri Suka went on : Observing the appearance of the Lord's foot in the Satya-loka, the Lotus-born went forth to receive it, the lustre of the nails of that foot dimming the glory of his own abode and hiding him in their radiance ; and the Patriarchs Marichi and the rest, the sages, the life-long celibates, and Sanandana and other yogis did likewise, O King. The Vedas and the Upavedas, the disciplines, external and internal, the science of logic, the Itihāsas, the ancillary lores, the Purāṇas, the collections of Āgamas like the Pāṇcharātra, and all those others in whom the taint of *karma* had been burnt up by the fire of knowledge fanned by the wind of yoga, prostrated themselves before that foot, by meditating on which they had attained that abode of Brahmā, which could never be gained by the performance of rites. The Lotus-born of the spotless renown offered *arghya* to that uplifted foot of Vishnu, from Whose lotus-navel he was born, and devoutly worshipped it, and then extolled it. The water from the water-pot of the Creator attained such sanctity by washing the foot of the Lord of the mighty strides that it became the celestial river (Gangā), O King. As she falls down through the upper air, she purifies the three worlds like the Lord's immaculate glory itself (1-4).

Brahmā and other Guardians of the worlds offered worship along with their followers to their suzerain Lord, Who had now contracted His mighty form (into that of Vāmana again), with water and other offerings, wreaths, celestial scents and unguents and fragrant incense, with the waving of lights, the scattering of puffed grain, unbroken rice, fruits and sprouts, with hymns extolling His exploits and cries of 'Victory to Thee !' with dance and song and music, the blowing of conches and the playing of kettle-drums. Jāmbavān, the king of the bears, infinitely fleet of foot, celebrated in every direction the triumph of the Lord by beat of drum (5-8).

The Asurās were incensed beyond bearing by the fact that when their King was under sacrificial vows the

entire earth had been taken away from him by the ruse of begging for three paces, and they told each other, 'This is no ordinary Brahmana. It is none other than Vishnu, foremost of the deluders, who, disguised as a Brahmana, is out to secure the purposes of the gods. This enemy, disguised as a neophyte, has filched under the pretence of begging the entire possessions of our master, who had renounced all violence, being engaged in the sacrificial rite. He who is ever vowed to truth, devoted to Brahmanas and full of compassion, would never utter a lie, much less when he was under sacrificial vows. Therefore it is our duty to kill him (Vishnu), and we would be serving our master too.' Saying this, the Asuras, Bali's followers, took up their weapons. And, though Bali was averse to it, they all rushed upon Vāmana in their wrath, O King, armed with trident and spear to slay Him. Seeing the Chiefs of the Asura host rush to the attack, the followers of Vishnu laughed and restrained them with upraised weapons, O King. Nanda, Sunanda, Jaya, Vijaya, Prabala, Bala, Kumuda, Kumudāksha, Vishvaksena, the King of the birds (Garuda), Jayanta, Srutadeva, Pushpadanta, and Sātvata, all of them endowed with the strength of ten thousand elephants, slaughtered the Asura army. Bali, seeing his angry followers being slain by the Lord's retainers, remembered the curse of Sukra and ordered them to desist, saying, 'O Viprachitti, and you Rāhu and Nemi, listen to me. Stop fighting, the time is not propitious to us. No mortal can by his own efforts overcome the Lord Who, as time, orders the happiness and misery of all creatures. The same Lord Who in the past was instrumental in promoting our prosperity and the misfortunes of the gods, is now disposed the other way. No creature can prevail against the Lord (Who functions as time) by means of armies or allies, by the exercise of intelligence, by resort to fortified cities, or by using incantations or drugs, and so on, or by such expedients as conciliation. You, prospered by fate, have vanquished these followers of Hari many a time. The same gods have now defeated us in battle and rejoice. We shall yet be victorious over them, should fate be propitious. Therefore await more favourable times' (9-24).

Srī Suka said : Having heard what their ruler said, the great Daitya and Dānava Chiefs, who received a beating at the hands of Vishṇu's retainers, took refuge in Rasātala, O King. Then, that most splendid of birds, the son of Tārکشya, divining the Lord's intentions, bound Bali with the bonds of Varuṇa on the day on which the *soma* was expressed in the sacrifice. When Vishnu, Who prevails over all, had the lord of the Asuras thus put in bonds, earth and sky and all the quarters resounded with dismayed cries of 'Alas, alas !' Seeing him bound with the cords of Varuṇa, O King, Vāmana told him, whose lustre was dimmed, but whose mind never wavered, and who had won endless fame, 'You promised Me three paces of earth, O Asura. I have covered all the earth with two paces. Show me where I can measure out the third. This earth of yours extends only as far as the sun's rays go, or the light of the moon and the stars reaches, or the rain-god lets down his showers. Before your very eyes I have covered the entire earth with one footstep, and have with My body enveloped the sky and all the quarters, and with My second step, I, the all-pervading, have covered the celestial world, thus occupying all that you possessed. Since you have not done what you promised, your destined place is hell. Because of that and because your Guru has approved of this, you shall fall into hell. The man who deceives a petitioner by not giving him the promised gift, falls into hell ; far from his reach is heaven, and all his day-dreams are vain. You, who preened yourself on your opulence, made me a promise and cheated me by failing to keep your word. You shall live in hell for some years, reaping the fruit of that lie' (25-35).

CHAPTER XXII

THE LORD EXALTS BALI

Srī Suka said : Though the Lord thus showed Himself hostile to him and tried to shake him from his righteous stand, the Asura, Bali, could not be unsettled ; and he replied to Him with composure, O King. Bali said : ' If Thou, O illustrious Lord, foremost of the

gods, thinkest that I have not been true to my word, I shall make good what I have said. Let me not lie under the imputation of cheating. Please take Thy third footstep by planting Thy foot on my head. I do not fear either fall into hell, or being bound by cords, or endless suffering and misery, or absolute impoverishment, or even being put by Thee in duress, as I fear infamy. Punishment meted out by those whom the world reveres is what should be prized most; neither father nor mother, neither brother nor friends deal out such punishment. Thou art assuredly the greatest well-wisher of us Asuras, though a friend in disguise, for Thou hast opened our eyes, blinded by pride in many things, by throwing us down from our position. I have been subdued and bound with the bonds of Varuṇa by Thee, Whose ways and works baffle the understanding; it was by inveterate enmity to Thee that many Asuras attained that goal which is the meed of those who give their exclusive devotion to Thee. I feel no great reason to be ashamed, nor do I feel unhappy. My grandfather Prahrāda was dear to Thy devotees and had won world-wide renown. He who looked on Thee as all in all was subjected to many a torture by his own father, Thine enemy. "What good is his body to a man, since it will desert him some day; or those robbers mis-called kinsmen, his sons and other claimants to property; or his wife, who is the cause of his being caught in the toils of *samsāra*; or his domestic preoccupations, which merely waste his life?" Having thus sized up and rejected all these, my grandfather of the unfathomable wisdom gave his unshaken allegiance to Thy lotus feet whence all fear flees, though Thou hadst played havoc with his side, because he, the most worthy among us all, dreaded the world. Likewise I too have been brought by fate before Thee, my foe, and forcibly deprived of my opulence; that opulence which robs a man of his discrimination and makes him unaware of the evanescence of life, with death always by his side' (1-11).

Srī Suka said: As he was saying this, Prahrāda, dear to the Lord, came there like the full moon rising, O first of the Kurus. Indrasena (Bali) looked at his grandfather shining in all his glory. He, who was clad in

yellow silks, was tall and beautiful, with eyes long as lotus petals, with a brilliantly black complexion, and long arms. Bali, held by the bonds of Varuṇa, could not receive him with honours as in former days. He bowed to him; his eyes were swimming with tears, and he hung his head in shame. The magnanimous one, seeing Him, the Protector of His devotees, seated, with the attendants Sunanda, Nanda and others waiting upon Him, approached Him with bowed head and prostrated himself before Him, his body thrilling, his eyes filling with tears, his mind overwhelmed by love (12-15).

Prahrāda then addressed the Lord: 'Thou gavest him the exalted position of Indra, and Thou hast taken it away this day; and in doing this Thou hast done a good thing. It seems to me that Thou hast conferred a supreme blessing on him by depriving him of that prosperity which stands in the way of self-knowledge. When even the wise man, who is self-controlled, is deluded by prosperity, how can others under its influence see the truth about the Self? I make my prostrations to Thee, the supreme Lord Narayana, Who rulest the world and art the Witness in the hearts of all beings.' (16-17).

Srī Suka said: The Lord Hiranyagarbha was about to address Madhusūdāna in the hearing of Prahrāda, who stood with folded hands; when Bali's good wife, filled with terror on seeing her husband manacled, made her prostrations to Upendra and implored him with folded hands, hanging down her head, O King. Vindhya-*vāli* said: 'Thou hast created these three worlds for Thy play. People with little understanding look with a proprietary eye upon them, O Lord, though it is Thou that promptest them to regard themselves as free agents. To Thee That createst, sustainest and destroyest the worlds, what is there that they can give?' (18-20).

Brahmā then addressed the Lord: 'O Creator and Ruler of the universe, O God of gods, Who standest forth as the world, please release him, who has been deprived of all he had; he does not deserve to be put in bonds. He gave away the entire earth to Thee as well as those worlds that he had won by good works; and he gave, too, his body, his all, without the slightest hesitation. When a man in whom there is no guile obtains

the highest of goals by virtue of having offered *arghya* at Thy feet and worshipped them with even a blade of grass, how can he who gave away the three worlds with a serene mind, deserve to suffer? (21-23).

The Lord told him : ' I take away all that he possesses from the man whom I wish to bless, O Brahman, since it is prosperity that makes men proud and overweeningly arrogant and makes them despise the world and Me. The *jīvātmā*, helplessly caught in the toils of *samsāra* by reason of his past *karma*, passes into all sorts of birth ; very rarely is he born as a human being. If, as a human being, he does not become proud by reason of his high birth, his deeds, youth, good looks, learning, power and riches, that itself should be regarded as due to My grace. He who is wholly devoted to Me will never succumb to the self-conceit and pride engendered by high birth and all those other advantages which are detrimental to one's true welfare. This leader of all Dānavas and Daityas, who has added to their renown, overcame even that Māyā which is invincible, and has not for a moment lost his sanity, even under extreme suffering. Deprived of his possessions, fallen from his high estate, reviled and put in bonds by his foes, abandoned by his kin, subjected to all sorts of suffering, threatened and cursed by his Guru, he was firm in his adherence to truth. And though I sought to confuse him by specious arguments as to where his duty lay, he would not swerve from Dharma. He has been granted by Me a place unattainable even by the gods. In the Meru-Sāvarṇi Manvantara, he with my full support will be the Indra. Till then let him live in Sūtala, which Viśvakarmā shall fashion ; those who live there shall be vouchsafed My gracious glance and thus be immune from physical and mental ailments, fatigue, listlessness, suffering from heat and cold and other pairs of opposites, as well as other troubles. Indrasena, great King, go with your kinsmen to Sūtala, the possession of which even the denizens of heaven may well envy you ; may all be well with you. No Guardian of the world shall prevail against you, not to speak of others ; and my discus shall slay those Daityas who are not amenable to your control. I shall protect you against all comers, as well as your

followers and possessions. You shall see Me always present there, O valiant one. Constantly witnessing My greatness there, any *āsuric* tendencies in you due to association with the Dānavas and Daityas will diminish and disappear' (24-36).

CHAPTER XXIII

VĀMANA CROWNED AS UPENDRA

Srī Suka said : When the Primordial Lord had thus spoken, the great one, who was loved by all saintly souls, addressed Him with folded hands, his eyes turbid with tears, his heart yearning with love, his voice choked with emotion. Bali said : ' Ah ! how wonderful that a mere effort to make my prostrations to Thee should have induced Thee to procure for me the supreme welfare which is the meed of those devotees who put themselves wholly in Thy hands. For Thou hast bestowed on a worthless Asura that grace which has never before been vouchsafed even to the immortals who are the Guardians of the worlds ! ' (1-2).

Srī Suka went on : Having said this, Bali, who was freed from his bonds, made his prostrations to Hari, Brahmā and Bhava and gladly departed to Sutala. The Lord, having thus restored heaven to Indra and fulfilled the desire of Aditi, protected the world as Upendra. Prahrāda, seeing his grandson, who was to carry on his line, freed from his bonds, and the recipient of the Lord's grace, addressed Him, his heart overflowing with love. Prahrāda said, ' Neither Virinchi, nor Srī, nor Sarva—not to speak of others—has secured Thy Grace as we Asuras have done, since Thou, Whose feet are adored by those whom all the worlds revere, hast undertaken to make our defence Thy care. O Haven of Refuge, Brahmā and others obtained their exalted rank and powers by savouring the honey of Thy lotus feet. How did we, evil in our ways and of evil descent, come to be favoured with Thy exceeding consideration ? Ah ! how wonderful are Thy ways, O Lord ! Thou with Thine endless *yogic* powers hast created the universe in play ; Thou art omniscient and the Soul in all that exists, and Thou lookest with an equal eye on all,

Thou art not partial, even though Thou lovest Thy devotee, being in this respect like the wishing tree by nature' (3-8).

The Lord replied, 'Pahrāda, my child, may all be well with you. Go to your home in Sutala, and be happy there with your grandson and bring happiness to your own folk. You shall see Me present always there, armed with the mace; and by the supreme joy of seeing Me, your nescience shall be dispelled' (9-10).

Sri Suka said: Pahrāda with his serene wisdom received with bowed head the command of the Lord, saying, 'If it so pleaseth Thee'. Along with Bali, he, the Chief of all the Asura forces, went round the Primordial Lord with all reverence, made his prostrations to Him, and with His leave entered the subterranean world. Then Hari-Nārāyaṇa spoke, O King, to Uśanas, who was seated close by among the priests in that assembly of Vedic scholars. He said, 'Fill up the gap in the rite started by your disciple, O Brahman; any flaw in a rite may be cured by a mere look cast on it by Brahmanas' (11-14).

Sukra replied, 'How could there be any flaw in the rite performed by one who worshipped, heart and soul, and with all the resources at his command, Thee That art the Inspirer of the rite, the Dispenser of the fruits of the sacrifice, and the Sacrifice itself? The repeated chanting of Thy name cures all faults in the utterance of *mantras*, the procedure adopted, the time and the place, the recipients of bounty and the materials used. While that is so, I shall do Thy bidding, O Lord That art all that is; for the carrying out of Thy commandments constitutes for men their highest felicity' (15-17).

Sri Suka went on: The blessed Uśanas welcomed Hari's directive, and with the assistance of the Brahmana sages completed Bali's interrupted sacrifice. Thus Hari, taking the form of a dwarf, begged the earth of Bali, and restored to his brother, the great Indra, heaven which his enemies had wrested from his hands. The Lord of the Patriarchs, Brahmā, along with the gods, the sages, the manes and the kings of men (the Manus), as well as Dakṣha, Bhṛgu, Angiras and others, and Sanat-kumāra and Bhava, made Vāmana ruler over the worlds

and their Guardians, for the gratification of Kaśyapa and Aditi and the welfare of all creatures. He appointed Vāmana as Upendra, to further the happiness of the worlds, since He was capable of upholding the cause of the Vedas, the gods, Dharma, fame, prosperity, all auspicious rites and heaven, as well as liberation. And all creatures rejoiced over that, O King. Thereupon Indra and the other Guardians of the worlds placed Vāmana in a celestial car, with all due honours, and took Him to heaven with Brahmā's approval. Having recovered the sovereignty of the three worlds, Indra was happy under the protecting arm of Upendra, and carefree in the enjoyment of unparalleled opulence. Brahmā, Sarva, Sanatkumāra, Bhṛgu and other sages, the manes, and all other creatures, including the Siddhas and others who move about in aerial cars, returned to their own abodes, O King, extolling that marvellous exploit of Vishnu, and praising Aditi too (18-27).

I have related to you, O Delight of your race, the story of the Lord of the immense strides, which is calculated to destroy the sins of those who hear it. The man who could exhaustively recount the glories of the Lord of the endless exploits could as well count the number of particles of dust in the earth! The *rishi*, the seer of the *mantra* asked, 'Is there a man living, or is anyone likely to be ever born, who could find the limits of the glory of the Lord of the infinite perfection?' The man who hears this story of the incarnation of the God of gods, of Hari of the marvellous exploits, will attain the supreme goal. If this story is told when any rite aiming at the propitiation of the gods, the manes or of men, is being performed, that rite is regarded, by those who know, as well done (28-31).

CHAPTER XXIV

THE LORD'S INCARNATION AS FISH

The King said : 'I wish to hear, O blessed one, of the first incarnation of Hari of the marvellous deeds, in which by the power of His Māyā, He sported in the semblance of a fish. Why did the supreme Lord take, like any *jīva* subject to the bondage of *karma*, the form

of a fish, which is looked down upon by all the world, being *tāmasic* in nature and exceedingly unpleasing in appearance? Tell us, revered sir, all about it exactly as it happened. All that concerns the doings of the illustrious Lord is bound to promote the happiness of the world' (1-3).

The Sūta said: Thus requested by Vishnurāta, the blessed son of Bādarāyaṇa, narrated the story of what Vishnu had done, taking the form of a fish. Sri Suka said: The Supreme Lord incarnates Himself for the protection of the cows, of Brahmanas, gods, good men, and the Vedas, and the safeguarding of Dharma and Artha. The Lord, though He is present in all creatures, high and low, like air, is not Himself affected by such distinctions, which are caused by the *guṇas* of Prakṛti, since He is unconditioned by the *guṇas*. At the end of the last Kalpa, there occurred a Pralaya caused by reason of Brahmā's slumber, when all the worlds, the earth and the rest were deluged by the ocean. When the Creator lay down to sleep at the appointed time, the powerful Asura Hayagrīva, who was near by, walked away with the Vedas as they issued from Brahmā's mouth. Knowing what Hayagrīva, the Dānava Chief, had done, the supreme Lord Hari took the form of a fish (4-9).

At that time, a royal sage named Satyavarata, who was devoted to Narayana, was practising austerities, subsisting on water. It was he who, famed as Śrāddha-deva, the son of Vivasvān, was appointed Manu for the present Mahākalpa by Hari. Once, while he was offering water libations in the Kṛtamālā, a fish came up with the water which he took in his cupped hands. Satyavrata, King of the Dravida county, put back into the river the fish along with the water, O scion of the Bharatas. Thereupon it piteously told the exceedingly compassionate King, 'How could you, who love the lowly, throw poor me back into the water in the river, O King, when I am terribly afraid of the aquatic animals, which slay each other, their own kin?' Not knowing that it was the Lord Who out of His love for him had taken the form of a fish in order to protect him, he decided to offer protection to the fish. On hearing its doleful

plaint, the King, who was moved to pity, put it into the water in his pot and took it to his hermitage. In one night it grew so big that there was not sufficient room for it in the water-pot. It told the King, 'I do not wish to live this straitened life within the pot, put me where I can live in comfort.' He took it out and put it in a bucketful of water. Thrown into it, it grew to the size of three cubits within the space of a *muhūrta*. And it told him, 'This bucket is not big enough for my comfort. Since I have thrown myself on your mercy, you must find me a big place, O King'. The King took it and put it into a pond. But the fish grew to a huge size, becoming too big for the pond. 'The water here is not sufficient for me, a water animal. Think of some way by which you can transfer me to a deep pool which never goes dry, taking care that I do not perish on the way.' Thus told, he took the fish from one pool to another, and since all of them proved too small for it, he finally put it in the sea. As he was doing that, the fish told him, 'Alligators and other exceedingly strong creatures will devour me here; you should not leave me, O valiant one' (10-24).

When he was thus bewildered by its seductive speech, he asked it, 'Who are you, worthy sir, that thus bewilder us, having taken the form of a fish? We have never seen or heard of any aquatic animal like you, who in a day grew too big for a lake that was a hundred *yojanas* wide. Without a doubt you are the exalted and imperishable Lord Narayana Himself, taking the form of a water-bred creature for the welfare of all beings. I make my salutations to Thee, O Paramount Lord That controlllest the creation, preservation and destruction of the worlds. Thou art the Soul and the Goal of us, Thy devotees, who put ourselves into Thy hands, O Lord. All the incarnations Thou takest in play are for promoting the welfare of all beings. Still, I should like to hear what for Thou hast taken this form. Thou art the Soul in all creatures, their Friend and Beloved. That is why Thou hast shown us this marvellous form of Thine. Devotion to Thy feet cannot be fruitless, as putting one's trust in those who love the body as the Self would be' (25-30).

Srī Suka said : When the King Satyavrata said this, the Lord of the worlds, to Whom His devotees are dear, and who loved to sport in the waters from the desire to fulfil Satyavrata's wish, answered him thus. The Lord said, 'The three worlds will be submerged in the waters of the Deluge on the seventh day from now, O subduer of the foe. Just before that happens, a huge ship sent by Me will come to you. Collecting by that time samples of all vegetation and every kind of seed, big and small, and taking with you representatives of all living creatures, you shall board that vessel along with the seven seers, and move on the waters without a care by the light of the sages' splendour, when the world is one vast sea immersed in darkness. You shall bind that vessel, which will be rocked by fierce winds, with the great serpent (Vāsuki) to my horn, for I shall be there near you. I shall roam the seas, O mighty one, for the duration of the night of Brahmā, dragging with me the vessel with you and the sages on board. You shall know, by direct realization in your heart, My glorious essence known as the Para Brahma, thanks to the enlightenment I shall out of My grace vouchsafe in answer to the questions you put me' (31-38).

Having thus told the King, Hari vanished from view. And he looked forward to the time that Hrshikeśa had indicated. Placing *darbha* grass on the ground with the ends pointing east, the royal sage sat on them, facing north-east, and meditating on the feet of Hari, Who had taken the semblance of a fish. Then the ocean, swelling with the floods of rain brought by great clouds, broke its bounds and deluged the earth. As he was thinking of the Lord's command, he saw a ship come there, and he got on board with the great sages, taking with him the herbs and animals. And the sages, pleased with him, told him, 'Meditate on Keśava, O King. He will assuredly deliver us from this peril and provide for our welfare'. And as the King meditated on Him, He appeared before him in the great ocean as a fish, a million *yojanas* long, with a single horn and a complexion like gold. Fastening the ship to His horn, as Hari had instructed Him, using the serpent as a cable, he extolled Madhusūdana with joy in his heart (39-45).

The King said : ' Be Thou, O Lord, our supreme teacher of wisdom, Thou, the Dispenser of liberation, Whom men, distraught by the travails of *samsāra* resulting from that eclipse of Self-knowledge which is due to beginningless nescience, attain by throwing themselves on Thy mercy, prompted to it by Thy grace. Be Thou our Mentor, and sunder the knot of the heart. It is by service to Thee that ignorant men, who, fettered by past *karma* and longing for happiness, have been performing actions which bring them but misery, come to discard that longing and the erroneous identification of the body with the Self. May that imperishable and paramount Lord bring us enlightenment, being greater than any Guru ; only by worshipping Him does a man purge himself of his ignorance, as silver is freed from dross in the fire, and regains his native state. I seek refuge in Thee, the Supreme Lord, since all other gods, teachers and others combining, cannot shed on a man a fraction of a ten-thousandth part of the grace that Thou canst bestow. Foolish people put their trust in an ignorant teacher, who is like a blind man leading the blind ; whereas Thou art self-luminous like the sun, and kindlest its power of perception in every organ. Therefore we, eager to secure our abiding welfare, have chosen Thee as our Guru. Ordinary men impart to others pernicious teaching, by following which they must inevitably fall into the darkest pit (*samsāra*). But Thou impartest indefeasible and eternal wisdom by means of which men may easily realize their essential Self. Thou art the Well-wisher and the Beloved of all creatures, their Soul and Inner Ruler ; their Teacher, their enlightenment, and the realization of all their wishes too. And yet the world, its intelligence clouded, its mind addicted to pleasure, does not know Thee, though Thou dwellest in its heart. I throw myself on Thy mercy, O Lord That art worthy of the adoration of the gods and art most to be desired as a haven of refuge, so that I may obtain enlightenment. Sever, I pray, the knot of the heart by Thy teaching, which reveals the Truth of Truths, and show me Thy essential Self' (46-53).

Sri Suka said : When the King thus requested Him,

the Primordial Lord, Who had taken the form of a fish, taught the truth to him as He sported in the great ocean. He taught the royal sage Satyavrata the entire Purāṇa (*Matsya Purāṇa*), which expounds the Ways of Knowledge, Devotion and Works and the mystery of the Self. Seated in the ship along with the sages, the royal sage Satyavrata heard the truth of the Self, the eternal Brahma, taught by the Lord in such a way as to leave no doubts in the mind. When the Deluge subsided and Brahmā woke up, Hari restored the Veda to him, having slain the Asura Hayagrīva. The same King Satyavrata, endowed with knowledge and enlightenment by Vishnu's grace, became Vaivasvata Manu in the present Kalpa. The man who hears this great tale of the dialogue in which figured Satyavrata, the royal sage, and the exalted Lord, the Wielder of the Sārṅga bow, Who took the form of a fish by His own Māyā, will be freed from all sins. He who recites the story of this incarnation of Hari every day, realizes all his purposes, and he attains the supreme goal. I make my prostrations to Him, the seeming fish, Who is the cause of all that exists ; Who recovered the entire corpus of the Veda, after slaying the Asura who had stolen it from the mouth of Brahmā when he slept with all his faculties in abeyance on the waters of the Deluge ; and Who expounded the Brahma to Satyavrata and his companions (54-61).

(Here ends the Eighth Book of *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam*)

SRIMAD - BHĀGAVATAM

BOOK IX

CHAPTER I

SUDYUMNA'S DOUBLE TRANSFORMATION

The King said : ' I have heard your description of all the Manvantaras and of the exploits that Hari of the limitless prowess performed in them. The royal sage Satyavrata, who was ruler of the Dravida country, and who at the end of the last Manvantara obtained enlightenment by worshipping the Lord, was, you have said, reborn as the son of Vivasvān, and became a Manu ; and you also mentioned Ikshvāku and other Kings, his sons. You should give us, O Brahman, an account of each of their lines and of the story of their descendants ; we shall listen devoutly, O blessed one. Tell us of the exploits of all those men of sacred renown who lived in the past and those who will be born in the future as well as of those who are alive at present ' (1-5).

The Sūta said : Thus desired by the King, Parīkshit, in that assembly of men learned in the Veda, the blessed Suka, who knew the highest Dharma, began his exposition. Sri Suka said : Listen to the following account, which deals with the main features of the story of Manu's line, O scorcher of the foe. It would be impossible to describe it fully, even if one took hundreds of years to do it. The Supreme Lord, Who is the Soul and Sustainer of all creatures, high and low, alone existed during the deluge at the end of the Kalpa, containing the universe within Himself; nought else existed. Out of His navel grew a golden lotus. In it was born the Self-created (Brahmā) with four faces, great King. From his mind was born Marīchi ; the latter's son was Kaśyapa. To him Vivasvān was born of Aditi, daughter of Daksha. His son was Srāddhadeva, the Manu, born of Samjñā, O scion of the Bharatas. That man of great self-possession begot ten sons on Sraddhā. These were Ikshvāku, Nrga, Saryāti, Dishta, Dhṛṣhta, Karūshaka, Narishyanta, Pṛshadhra, Nabhaga and Kavi (6-12).

When this Manu was childless, the capable Vasishta conducted for him the sacrifice for the propitiation of Mitra and Varuṇa, so that he could have children. When it was in progress, Sraddhā, Manu's wife, who was subsisting entirely on milk for the duration, approached the Hotā, and making her reverence to him, requested him to see that as the result of the rite she should have a daughter. Directed by the Adhvaryu to make oblations in the fire, the Brahmana who functioned as Hotā offered an oblation with a collected mind, dwelling upon Sraddhā's request, as he uttered the formula 'Vashat', O King. Owing to that deviation made by the Hotā, the child was born as a female, and named Iḷā. Manu, who was none too pleased to see her, told his preceptor, 'How has it come to pass, O blessed one, that the rite performed by all of you, well-versed in the Vedas, should have produced such contrary results? What a pity that the *mantra* should have misfired in this manner! You are all proficient in the *mantras* and their application, and self-controlled in your lives. Your sins have been burnt up by your austerities. How, then, did what was different from what you had wanted come about, something as improbable as the utterance of a lie by the gods?' (13-18).

When he said this, the blessed one, our great-grandfather, saw that it was due to a lapse on the part of the Hotā, and he thus answered the son of the sun-god. 'This result, contrary to what was purposed, is due to a deviation for which your Hotā is responsible. I shall, however, ensure by my power that you get a good son.' Thus resolved, the blessed one of the mighty renown extolled the Primordial Lord (Vishnu), desiring that Iḷā should become a male. The exalted and paramount Lord Hari, pleased with him, granted him the boon he desired, and Iḷā thereupon became Sudyumna, a great personage (19-22).

He went out hunting in the forest once, riding a horse bred in the Sindhu region, and with some of his officials following. Armed with a splendid bow and marvellous arrows, and clad in coat of mail, he pursued a deer, which sped towards the north. The prince entered a wood at the foot of Mount Meru, where the exalted Lord Siva

sports with Umā. The moment he entered the wood, Sudyumna, slayer of the foe, found that he had been turned into a woman and the horse into a mare, O King. In the same way all his retainers found that they had all undergone a change of sex, and they looked at each other disconsolately (23-27).

Here the King (Parīkshit) interrupted with a query. 'How did this place come to possess such power, O blessed one, and who was responsible for that? Please answer, we are very curious to know' (28).

Srī Suka said: Once the sages given to strict vows, whose splendour dispelled the darkness of the quarters and dimmed the lustre of all other lights, came there to see Girīśa. On seeing them, the Goddess Ambikā, who was naked, was greatly abashed. She got up from her husband's lap in all haste and donned her clothes. The sages, for their part, seeing their absorption in love, left the place and went to the hermitage of Nara and Nārāyaṇa. Thereupon the exalted Lord said, from the desire to appease His beloved, 'Any male who enters this place shall become a female'. From that time males have avoided that wood (29-33).

She (the transformed Sudyumna) went from forest to forest along with her followers. The divine Budha, seeing that beautiful woman, surrounded by others of her sex, strolling near his hermitage, desired her. And she too desired him, the son of King Somā, for her husband. And she bore him a son, Purūravas. The King Sudyumna, son of Manu, having thus been changed into a woman, thought of his family preceptor, we are told. The sage was grieved to see his predicament, and desiring that Sudyumna should recover his manhood, set himself to propitiate Śankara. The exalted Lord was pleased with him. Wishing to oblige him, and at the same time resolved that what He himself had said should not be falsified, He spoke thus, O King. 'Your disciple Sudyumna shall be a male and a female in alternate months. Subject to this decision, let him rule the earth according to his pleasure.' Having won manhood under conditions by the grace of his preceptor, he ruled his kingdom, but his subjects did not like his being King. He had three sons, Utkala, Gaya and

Vimala, who were devoted to Dharma and became rulers of kingdoms in the South. When his time was up, the capable ruler of Pratishtāna handed over his kingdom to his son Purūravas, and went to the penitential woods (33-42).

CHAPTER II

VAIVASVATA MANU'S OTHER SONS

Srī Suka said : When his son had thus gone to the forest, Manu, the son of Vivasvān, practised penance on the banks of the Yamunā for a hundred years. Then he worshipped the Lord Hari from the desire for sons. And he obtained ten sons, Ikshvāku and others, who were comparable to him. Pṛshadhra, the son of Manu, was appointed by the family preceptor to herd cows. And he kept unsleeping vigil, watching over them in the night, armed with a sword. Once a tiger got into the cowshed at night when it was raining. The cows that had been lying down got up and ran about terrified in the shed. The strong beast pounced upon a cow, and she bellowed in her fright. Hearing her cry, Pṛshadhra ran towards where it came from, armed with his sword. It being night and the stars having set, he unwittingly cut off the head of the red-brown milch cow, mistaking it for the tiger. The tiger too had its ear slit by the point of the sword, and it ran away terrified, its blood dripping on the way. Pṛshadhra, slayer of the foe, thought that he had slain the tiger, but when the night was past he was distressed to see the cow killed by himself. The family preceptor cursed him, who had committed a sin unwittingly, saying, ' You shall not be even an ordinary Kshattriya. You shall be a Sūdra by this act of yours'. Thus cursed by his teacher, he accepted the curse with folded hands, and he took the vow of celibacy, which is dear to the sages, O valiant one. By intense love, he became wholly devoted to the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, the All-soul, the Immaculate Lord ; he won equanimity and was the well-wisher of all creatures. Freed from all attachment, undisturbed by loves and hates, with his senses under control, owning nothing, he lived on what came his way by

chance, and meditated on the Ātman; and supremely content with the illumination he gained, he roamed the earth in composure, looking to all the world like one who was blind or deaf or a witless fool. Living in this wise he betook himself to a forest. Seeing one day a forest fire raging, he allowed his body to be burnt by it, and thus the sage attained the Para Brahma (1-14).

Kavi, Manu's youngest son, being wholly devoid of attachment to pleasures, renounced the kingdom as well as his relations, entered the penitential woods, installing the self-effulgent Lord in his heart, and reached Him at a tender age. From Karūsha, the son of Manu, were descended the Kārūshas, who were Kshattriyas. They, who were devoted to the Brahmanas and who loved Dharma, were the rulers of the Northern regions. From Dhṛshta were descended the Dhārshatas, Kshattriyas, who attained to Brahmanahood. Nṛga's son was Sumati; his son was Bhūtajyoti, and his son, Vasu. Vasu's son was Pratika; his son was Oghavān; and he had a son, also named Oghavān, and a daughter Oghavatī, whom Sudarśana married (15-18).

Narishyanta had a son Chitrasena, and he a son, Daksha. The latter had a son Midhvān, and he a son Kūrcha. The latter had a son Indrasena. Veetihotra was the son of Indrasena, and his son was Satyaśravas. The latter had a son, Uruśravas, and he a son Devadatta. To Devadatta was born the great sage Agniveśya, who was the fire-god himself, and was also known as Kānīna and Jātūkarnya. From him was descended the Brahmana clan called the Agniveśyas, O King. That completes the account of Narishyanta's descendants (19-22).

Now I will tell you of Dishta's family. He had a son Nābhāga, not to be confused with another Nābhāga (to be named presently). He became a Vaiśya by reason of the pursuits he followed. He had a son Bhalandana, and the latter a son Vatsapṛiti. He had a son, Prāmsu, and he a son Pramati. His son was Khanitra, and his son was Chākshusha. He had a son Vivimsāti. The latter had a son Rambha, and Rambha, a son, the righteous Khaninetra. He had a son Karandhama, O King. His son was Avīkshit, and he had a son, Marutta, the emperor. The great yogi Samvarta, son of Angiras, conducted

a sacrifice for him. There has been no other sacrifice like that of Marutta. The vessels and all other things that were used in it were excellent, being made all of gold. Indra rejoiced over the *soma* he quaffed there, and the Brahmanas over the fees they received. The Maruts themselves were the servers at the feast; and the members of the sacrificial assembly were the Viśvedevas (23-28).

Marutta's son was Dama; his son was Rājyavardhana. He had a son Sudhṛti, and he a son Nara, who was also known as Soudhṛteya. His son was Kevala, whose son was Bandhumān. Bandhumān's son was Vegavān. The latter's son was Bandhu, and his son was the King Trṇabindu. The celestial nymph Alambusā married him, who was the repository of all noble qualities; and she had excellent sons and a daughter Iḍavidā by him. The sage Viśravas, who had learnt the 'Great Lore' from his father (Pulasthya), the master-yogi, begot on Iḍavidā a son Dhanada (Kubera), the Lord of Wealth. Viśāla, Sūnyabandhu and Dhūmraketu were Trṇabindu's sons. Viśāla, the King who continued the line, established the city known as Vaiśālī. His son was Hemachandra, and his son Dhūmrāksha. His son Samyama had two sons, Kṛśāśva and Devaja. Kṛśāśva's son was Somadatta, who propitiated the Lord of the sacrifice with horse sacrifices. And having thus propitiated the Supreme Lord, he, who had the help and support of master-yogis, attained the supreme goal, liberation. Somadatta's son was Sumati, and his son was Janamejaya. These were the rulers of the line of Viśāla, who sustained Trṇabindu's renown (29-36).

CHAPTER III

THE STORY OF SUKANYĀ

Srī Suka said: Saryati, Manu's royal son, was one who was well-versed in the Vedic teaching; it was he who explicated the procedure to be adopted in the rites on the second day of the sacrifice offered by the scions of the Angiras clan. He had a daughter Sukanyā, whose eyes were like the lotus. Once, going to the

forest accompanied by her, he reached the hermitage of Chyavana. She with her companions went round the forest looking at the trees. She saw two lights like fireflies in a hole in an ant-hill. The young girl in her ignorance pricked them with a thorn, prompted by fate, and blood flowed fast from them. From that moment the forces that had accompanied the King could pass neither urine nor faeces. The royal sage was astonished to see this, and he told them, 'I hope none of you has offended against the scion of the Bhṛguś by objectionable conduct. It is clear that someone among us must have violated the sanctity of the hermitage'. Sukanyā, who was terrified, told her father, 'I did something. I prodded with a thorn two lights, not knowing what they were'. Saryāti was alarmed at hearing what his daughter said, and he with some effort pacified the sage, who was covered by the ant-hill. And, understanding what the sage wished, he gave away his daughter in marriage to him. Thus escaping from peril, he took leave of the sage and returned to his city with his mind at ease (1-9).

○ Sukanyā, having got the extremely irascible Chyavana for her husband, propitiated him by anticipating his wants and fulfilling them with unwinking vigilance and assiduity. Sometime later the celestial twins, the Aśvins, came to that hermitage. Honouring them according to custom, Chyavana made a request. 'Make me young, you can do it. Though you are denied a share of the *soma* in the sacrifice, I shall give you a full measure of the juice. You should give me youth and beauty, such as young women love.' The great physicians welcomed what he said, and signified assent. 'Please plunge into this pool, which has been formed by the Siddhas.' Having said this, the Aśvins made him, whose body was worn out with age, whose veins stood out, and who, with his wrinkles and grey hairs, was unsightly, enter the pool (along with them). Therefrom emerged three beautiful persons whom all women must love. Clad in splendid raiment, and adorned with lotus garlands and ear-pendants, they were all exactly alike in appearance. The beautiful woman, looking at them, who were identical in appearance, and of a sunlike brilliance, could not discover which was her

husband. Thereupon the good lady threw herself on the mercy of the Āsvins. And they, pleased with her fidelity to her spouse, pointed him out to her, and taking leave of the sage went to heaven in their aerial car (10-17).

Saryāti, wishing to perform a sacrifice, went to Chyavana's hermitage. He saw a man of sunlike splendour by his daughter's side. When she made her prostrations at his feet, he told her, without blessing her, and in a voice that showed that he was none too pleased with her, 'What have you done? Deceiving your husband, the sage whom all the world reveres, and leaving him, who was old and unpleasing, you have, you wicked woman, taken this vagabond for your lover. Born in a respectable family, how could you bring yourself to act in this unbecoming way, besmirching its fair name? You are living with a paramour without the least shame. You will be the cause of your father's and husband's families falling into the darkest of hells!' (18-21).

Thus rebuked by her father, she, smiling sweetly in her innocence, told him, 'Father, this is none other than your son-in-law, the scion of the Bhṛguś'. And she told her father all about how he had gained his youth and good looks. And he, astonished and supremely gratified, embraced his daughter. Chyavana conducted the *soma* sacrifice for the valiant man (Saryāti); and though the Āsvins were not entitled to the *soma* offering, he by virtue of his puissance made them an offering of *soma*. Indra of the instant anger was incensed by this, and snatched the thunderbolt to slay him; the scion of the Bhṛguś immobilised his arm, which held the thunderbolt. Since then, all have agreed that the Āsvins, who had been excluded from partaking of the *soma* offering on the ground of being physicians, should have their share of it (22-26).

Saryāti had three sons, Uttānabarhis, Ānarta and Bhūrishaṇa. Ānarta had a son Revata. He built the city Kuśasthali (Dvāravatī) on an island in the ocean, and living in it ruled Ānarta and other territories, O subduer of the foe. He had a hundred excellent sons, of whom Kakudmī was the eldest. Kakudmī, taking with him his maiden daughter Revatī, went to Brahmaloka, which is free from *rajas* and *tamas*, to see the Lord

Brahmā and consult Him as to a proper match for the girl. As a music concert was in progress, he waited for a little while for an opportunity to speak. When it was over, he made his prostrations to the first of the gods and told him what he had come for. On hearing what he said, the blessed Lord laughed a great laugh and told him, 'Ah, King, all those whom you had in mind have been devoured by time. We do not hear even the names of their sons, grandsons and great-grandsons now. Twenty-seven four-*yuga* cycles have elapsed since then. So go and grve this jewel of a girl to that jewel among men, the immensely strong Baladeva, an *amsā* of the Lord of all the gods. For ridding the earth of its burden, the Lord, Who protects all creatures, and to speak or hear of Whose name is to be purified, is now incarnate, along with Baladeva, an *amsā* of Himself'. Thus bidden by Aja, he made his prostrations to him and returned to his city, which had been abandoned by his brothers long ago from fear of the Yakshas; they had settled elsewhere, in the different quarters. Giving away his flawless daughter in marriage to Bala, the strong, the King went to Badari, the hermitage of Nārāyana, to practise austerities (27-36).

CHAPTER IV

DURVĀSAS CURSES AMBARISHA AND RUES IT

Srī Suka said : Nābhāga was the son of Nabhaga. When he, having become a learned man as a student, returned home, his brothers gave him, the youngest, his father as his share of the family properties. 'Brothers, what have you allotted to my share?' 'We shall give you our father'. 'Father, my elder brothers have allotted you as my share'. 'Do not take their words seriously, my child. Meanwhile here is the Sattra sacrifice being offered by the Brahmanas of the Āngirasa-*gotra*. When the sixth day of the rite recurs, they, though exceedingly intelligent, are baffled as to what should be done on that day, O learned one. Teach those great men these two *sūktas* that celebrate the Viśvedevas. They, when going to heaven, will give you all the wealth and goods that remain unspent in the Sattra. There-

fore go to them'. And he did so. And, before they went to heaven, they gave him what was left after the sacrifice. When he was about to take it, a person with a black complexion came there from the North, and he told him, 'All that is left on the sacrificial grounds belongs to me.' The son of Manu told him, 'But it is mine, the sages gave it to me'. He rejoined, 'Let us refer this dispute between us to your father'. And he (Nābhāga) went and asked his father. 'Once upon a time the sages decided that Rudra should have as His share all that remained on the sacrificial grounds. Actually, that God has a right to all that there is'. Nābhāga came and told Him, making his prostrations to Him as he did so, 'My father said, O Lord, that without a doubt all that is left on the sacrificial grounds is Thine. I bow my head to Thee, O Brahman, be pleased to forgive me'. 'Since your father said what was right, and you have spoken the truth, I give you, who shall be a seer of *mantras*, enlightenment in regard to the eternal Brahman. Take all the wealth and goods which were not spent in the sacrifice, and which belong to Me. I give them to you.' Having said this, the Lord, Who loves the truth, vanished from view. He who recalls this episode with a collected mind both morning and evening becomes learned, and a master of *mantras*, and reaches the supreme goal (1-12).

To Nābhāga was born Ambarisha, the great devotee of the Lord, who had acquired such superlative merit by his virtues that even the irresistible curse of a Brahmana was powerless against him (13).

The King said: 'I wish to hear, O blessed one, the story of that wise royal sage against whom the punishment that the Brahmana sought to inflict proved unavailing' (14).

Sri Suka said: The fortunate Ambarisha, having succeeded to the rulership of the earth with its seven island continents, the possession of endless wealth and incomparable power, looked upon all that, which was beyond the reach of most men, as no more substantial than things seen in a dream, realizing as he did that power and prosperity, with which men are infatuated,

were perishable. He loved with a great love the exalted Lord Vāsudeva and the saintly souls who are devoted to Him, and as a consequence came to look upon the universe as no better than a clod. He gave his mind wholly to the lotus feet of Krishna; his words were devoted exclusively to expatiating on the glorious qualities of the Lord of Vaikuntha. His hands were engaged in sweeping and cleaning the temple of Hari, and his ears in listening to the uplifting tales of Achyuta's exploits. His eyes were engrossed by the places where Mukunda's images were installed; his body was joined in embrace with the bodies of the Lord's servants; his breath was devoted to inhaling the sweetness of the auspicious basil, whose fragrance was derived from His lotus feet; his tongue to tasting the food that had been offered Him. His feet took him repeatedly on pilgrimage to the shrines of Hari; His head bent in perpetual adoration of the feet of Hṛshikeśa. He accepted objects of enjoyment such as had been offered to the Lord, to confirm his own zeal for service to the Lord, not for the sake of pleasure. He did all this in such a way that his love for the illustrious Lord's devotees grew. Dedicating all his works to the exalted Lord Adhokshaja, the First Cause and the Dispenser of the fruits of the sacrifice, and seeing the Paramātmā as present in all that exists, he ruled the earth with the advice of Brahmanas who were entirely devoted to the Lord. He worshipped the Lord of the sacrifice with horse sacrifices conducted for him by Vasiṣṭha, Asita, Gautama and others in the desert region on the banks of the Sarasvatī and facing the stream; offering them with all the amplitude of ancillary rites and generous fees which his immense opulence permitted. In those sacrifices, the members of the assembly, the priests and others, clad in splendid raiment, looked like the gods themselves and were as unwinking. Even his retainers, singing and hearing others sing the doings of the illustrious Lord, had no desire for that heaven, which the gods love. The objects of desire which such men enjoy, though even Siddhas find it difficult to get them, bring no great delight to them however, since they are in constant enjoyment of the Bliss of the Self; for they see Achyuta within their hearts (15-25).

Thus the King gradually shed all attachments by virtue of propitiating Hari by sustained devotion and austerities and the practice of his own Dharma. He came to regard as unreal and of no account the pleasures of the domestic life, the company of spouse and children and relations, the possession of splendid tuskers, chariots, horses and infantry, a limitless store of jewels, gems and weapons, and inexhaustible treasures. Hari, pleased with his exclusive devotion to Him, gave his devotee His own discus, which protected His devotees and was the terror of their foes. Desiring to propitiate Vishnu, the valiant King took-vows with his wife, who was of the same virtuous disposition as himself, for the observance of the *Dvādasi-vrata* for a whole year. On the completion of the *vrata* in the month of Kārtika, he bathed in the Kālindī, having fasted for three days, and worshipped Hari in Madhuvana (Mathurā). Then, bathing the image of the Lord according to the procedure laid down for the Māhābhisheka, with a wealth of materials, he clothed and adorned Keśava with jewels and offered Him sandal paste, flowers and other honours and worshipped Him, with his mind wholly concentrated on Him. And he honoured, too, with great devotion, those blessed Brahmanas who were supremely content, having realized all that they had desired. He sent to their houses sixty crores of cows, their horns covered with gold, their hooves with silver, and with splendid hoods over them; they were great milkers and docile, young and beautiful, and they had their calves with them; vessels for milking, and so on, were given along with them. Then, having given the Brahmanas rich and delectable food and paid them ample fees, he was about to break his fast with their permission (26-35).

At that moment the blessed Durvāsas himself came there as his guest. The King honoured him by going forward to receive him and making the customary offerings. And, prostrating himself before him, he begged him to take food with him. He agreed and went to the Kālindī for doing the obligatory midday rites. He plunged in its holy waters, meditating on the Brahma. As only half a *muhūrta* was still left of the twelfth day of the fortnight within which he should take food, the

King, who was well-versed in Dharma, was at a loss as to how he should act in this dilemma presented by a conflict of duties, and consulted competent Brahmanas. 'It would be wrong to be remiss in the duty to the Brahmana. On the other hand, it would be wrong if I did not break my fast before the twelfth day of the fortnight expires. How should I act so as not to put myself in jeopardy or be guilty of violating Dharma?' Having thus deliberated, he decided, 'It would be proper to break my fast by taking only a drink of water. Brahmanas say that drinking water can be regarded as neither eating nor fasting.' Having thus decided and taken a drink of water, the royal sage awaited the return of the Brahmana, O best of the Kurus, meditating on Achyuta (35-41).

Durvāsas, having finished the midday obligatory rites, returned from the Yamunā and was greeted by the King, but he knew by second sight what the King had done. As he stood before him with folded hands, he, who was exceedingly hungry, said, his whole body trembling with rage, his face contracted in a frown, 'Ah, look at the transgression of duty by this cruel man, the false devotee of Vishnu, who intoxicated with prosperity behaves as if he were a law unto himself. This very moment you shall reap the fruit of your action in eating without having fed me, though when I came here you asked me to be your guest.' As he said this, he whose heart was aflame with wrath, plucked a lock of his matted hair and raised an evil spirit, which was as fierce as the conflagration at the dissolution of the worlds, and directed it against him. The King, steadily looking at it as it came flaming, armed with a sword, and shaking the earth under its tread, did not stir from his place. The Almighty Lord's discus, which He had appointed to guard over His devotee, burnt that spirit as the forest fire might burn an angry snake. Durvāsas, who saw that his effort was not merely foiled, but the discus was actually coming to attack him, was terrified; he ran in every direction to save himself. The Lord's discus pursued him as the flaming forest fire pursues the snake. The sage, seeing it close behind him, sought to shelter in a cave of Mount Meru and ran towards it. Fleeing thus,

he betook himself to every quarter, to the sky, the earth, the subterranean regions, the oceans, the upper worlds and their Guardians, and heaven. But wherever he went, there he saw the terrible Sudarsana (42-51).

When he could find no saviour anywhere, he was terrified ; and in his desire to find a shelter he went to the Lord Virinchi, crying, ' O Lord That art the Dispenser of all destinies and art Self-create, save me from the power embodied in the discus of the Invincible Lord.' Brahmā told him, ' My abode, along with the universe, will disappear when at the end of a *Dvipa-rārdha*, the Lord, functioning as time, ends His play and decides to burn it all by a mere wrinkle of His eyebrow. Myself, Bhava, the Patriarchs Daksha, Bhṛgu and others, the great gods and rulers of spirits, are all of us submissive to His will ; receiving on our heads His commandments, we execute them for the welfare of all creatures ' (52-54).

Thus rebuffed by Virinchi, and harassed by Vishnu's discus, Durvāsas sought the protection of Sarva, Who lives in Kailasa. Śrī Rudra told him, ' We, my child, cannot prevail against the Almighty Lord ; within Him, the Supreme Lord, are to be found thousands of cosmoses like this one—which are the bodies of *jīvas* like Brahmā—emerging from time to time, to disappear in due course, and within these wander the like of us as in a maze. Myself, Sanatkumāra, Nārada, the blessed Lord Aja, Kapila, Apāntaratmas, Devala, Dharma, Āsuri, Marīchi and other such omniscient sages, and the master-adepts, cannot divine His purposes, being caught in His Māyā. This weapon of His, Who is the Lord supreme over all that exists, is something which we cannot resist. Go and throw yourself on the mercy of Hari Himself. He will do what is good for you ' (55-59).

Thereupon, Durvāsas, abandoning all hope, went to the abode of Hari, called Vaikuntha, where the Lord of the Goddess Śrī abides with her. Scorched by the fire of the Invincible Lord's weapon, he fell at His feet, his body in a tremble, and cried, ' O Achyuta, Ananta, O Lord for Whom the saintly long, O Protector of the universe, save me, who have sinned. Not realizing Thy supreme greatness, I offended against those whom Thou

lovest. Be pleased to pardon my transgression, O Dispenser of all destinies. Even he who is lodged in hell is freed when Thy name is uttered' (60-62).

The Lord told him, 'I am in the hands of My devotees, O Brahman, and therefore hardly free to do as I like; I love my devotees, and the saintly souls have by their love ravished my heart. I should have no use even for Myself or for the Goddess Śrī, who is inseparable from Me, if I could not have with Me My devotees, those good men who look upon Me as the supreme goal. How could I give them up, who have found refuge in Me, having given up their all—spouse, house, children, friends, their very lives, as well as their wealth and all that they hope for in this world and the next? The good men who have fixed their hearts on Me and who look upon all the world with an equal eye, have captured My heart by their devotion, as faithful spouses win the hearts of their good husbands. They do not want even the four supreme blessings, translation to My world, and the rest, won by service to Me, since they are perfectly content with that service; how then could they value aught else, which is subject to the ravage of time? The saints are the heart of Me, and I am their heart. They know nothing dearer than Me, and I know none was is dearer than they. But I will tell you of a way out, O Brahman, listen carefully. Go to him against whom you designed to employ this black magic, which has now recoiled on you. The power that is employed against good men recoils on the doer and harms him. The powers that Brahmanas obtain by austerities and devotion no doubt promote their good; but if they are practised by one who is ill-bred and wicked, they produce the contrary results. Therefore, O Brahman, go to the King, the son of Nābhāga—and—may all be well with you—obtain his forgiveness. Then you shall find peace' (63-71).

CHAPTER V

AMBARISHA SAVES DURVĀSAS

Sri Suka said: Thus instructed by the Lord, Durvāsas, who was tormented by the discus, returned to Ambarisha and clasped his feet grieving. But he,

seeing him so anxious to placate him, and being ashamed at the sage's having touched his feet, was distraught with compassion, and he thus extolled Hari's weapon. Ambarisha prayed, 'You are the god of fire and the glorious sun-god. You art the moon-god, master of the stars. You are the deities presiding over water and earth, over sky and air, over the subtle elements and the organs of sense and action. I make my salutations to you, O Sudarśana of the thousand spokes, beloved of the Lord. O protector of the world, and destroyer of all weapons, may you be propitious to the Brahmana. You are Dharma, Rta and Satya, the sacrifice and the consumer of all sacrifices. You are the protector of the worlds, the soul in all creatures, the supreme puissance of the Paramount Lord. I make my salutations to you, O Sunābha, who are the protector of all norms of Dharma, and the fire that destroys the unrighteous Asuras. You are the protector of the three worlds; you are of a dazzling purity and swift as thought, and the doer of marvellous deeds. By your splendour, which is of the nature of Dharma, O Lord of Speech, the darkness of ignorance is dispelled and the minds of good men are enlightened. The world of cause and effect, of high and low, is manifested by you. Your greatness is immeasurable. When you are despatched by Hari of the spotless glory, you, O invincible, enter the forces of the Daityas and Dānavas and shine on the battle-field, as you cut down intermittently their arms and bellies, their thighs and feet and necks. You, O protector of the worlds, have been appointed by the Lord armed with the mace to destroy wicked men. Be pleased, O you that are possessed of all strength, to ensure the safety of the Brahmana, so that our family may prosper. That way you would be vouchsafing your grace to us. If we have to our credit any act of charity or any sacrifice offered, if I have been faithful to my Dharma and if my family has always looked upon the Brahmana as God Himself, let this Brahmana be freed from fear. If the exalted Lord, the sole Repository of all noble qualities, is pleased with us for looking upon all creatures as His tabernacles, let the Brahmana be freed from torment' (1-11).

Sri Suka said: Thus extolled by the King, Sudar-

śana, Vishnu's discus, which was scorching the Brahmana on all sides, cooled down in compliance with the King's prayer. Durvāsas, saved from the burning heat of the weapon, and feeling at ease, called the highest blessings on the King, and praised him. Durvāsas said: 'Ah! I have seen this day the greatness of the devotees of Ananta; for, though you have been sinned against, O King, you wish well of me. What is there that good men cannot do or great men cannot renounce, when they have enshrined in their heart Hari, the Protector of His devotees? What is there that can be lacking to the devotees of Him Whose feet purify, and by merely hearing of Whose name a man is cleansed of all his sins? I am greatly in your debt, O King, who are the soul of mercy, since you overlooked my offence and saved my life' (12-17).

The King who, waiting for his return, had been fasting, clasped his feet and propitiated him and got him to eat. And he, having eaten the delicious food that was served him with great love, was well content, and he considerably asked the King to eat. 'I am delighted and blest, seeing you, the devotee of the Lord, touching you, talking to you, enjoying the hospitality dispensed by one whose mind is fixed on the Lord. The women in heaven shall often sing of this glorious deed of yours, and the earth shall proclaim your holy name' (18-21).

Srī Suka said: Having thus praised the King, Durvāsas, who was greatly pleased, took leave of him and rose up into the sky on his way to Brahmaloka, which is beyond the reach of those who put their faith in barren logic. A whole year had passed between the sage's going and returning. And the King, desirous of seeing him, had subsisted on water all this time. When Durvāsas had left, Ambarisha ate the remnants of the food that the Brahmana had eaten and thus sanctified. Thinking of the sage's suffering and his liberation, and of his own grit and fortitude, he attributed it all to the greatness of the Supreme Lord. The King, possessed of many exalted virtues like this, cultivated devotion to Vāsudeva, the Paramātman and the Brahma, while discharging his duties faithfully, and by virtue of that

devotion came to look upon all enjoyments, including Brahmā's, as no better than hell. Then that wise man entrusted his kingdom to the care of his sons, who were of the same disposition as himself, and entered the penitential woods, and there, with his mind firmly fixed on Vāsudeva, his own soul, he found liberation from the shackles of *samsāra*. The man who recites and meditates upon this holy tale of the King Ambarisha shall become devoted to the Lord (22-27).

CHAPTER VI

KAKUTSTHA, MĀNDHĀTĀ AND SOUBHARI

Srī Suka said : Ambarisha had three sons, Virūpa, Ketumān and Sambhu. Virūpa, the eldest, had a son Prshadaśva, and he a son Rathītara. The latter having no sons, Angiras begot on his wife sons who were endowed with Brāhmic lustre, having been requested to do so for the continuation of the line. Though these, being born of the wife of Rathītara, were reckoned as belonging to Rathītara's clan, they were also treated as scions of the Angirasas, and as the foremost among all the descendants of Rathītara, because they were endowed with both Kshattriya and Brahmana qualities (1-3).

When Vaivasvata Manu once sneezed, Ikshvāku, his son, emerged from his nostril. Vikukshi, Nimi and Dandaka were the eldest of his hundred sons ; of them twenty-five ruled over as many divisions in the eastern quarter of Āryāvarta, twenty-five in the western, three in the middle, and the rest in other parts of Āryāvarta, O King. Once Ikshvāku, about to perform an *ashtaka śrāddha*, told his son, Vikukshi, 'Go and fetch flesh fit for offering in the sacrifice, do not be long about it.' He, complying, went to the forest and slew beasts that were fit to be offered in the *śrāddha*; but being hungry, the valiant man, in a fit of absent-mindedness, ate a hare (he had killed). He brought the rest to his father. His Guru (Vasishtha), asked by Ikshvāku to sprinkle it with water for purification, said that it was defiled flesh and not fit to be offered in the rite. The King, coming to know of his (son's) transgression, from what his Guru said, exiled him from his country in anger, because

he had violated the practice of good men. Ikshvāku engaged in philosophical discussions with the adept in *japa* (Vasishtha), and as a result became a yogi. And he renounced the body and attained the Supreme (4-10).

On his father's death Vikukshi returned home and ruled the kingdom. He propitiated Hari with the offering of sacrifices. He was known as Sasāda. His son was Puranjaya, who was also known as Indravāha and Kakutstha. You shall hear how he got these names by his exploits. The gods were engaged in a deadly conflict with the Dānavas. The valiant Kakutstha was invited by the gods, who had been defeated by the Dānavas, to join them as their ally. Indra, desired by him to serve as his mount, took the form of a mighty bull at the behest of the God of Gods, Vishnu, the Inner Ruler and Paramount Overlord of the universe. Putting on armour, he armed himself with a celestial bow and sharp arrows, and got up on the bull and sat on its hump, ready to fight, while the gods extolled him. Filled with the puissance of the supreme Lord Vishnu, he, with the gods, laid siege to the city of the Daityas in the West. It was a tumultuous battle that he fought with them, it made the hair stand on end. And he despatched those who faced him in battle to Yama's abode with his arrows. Others, under his attack, found it impossible to stand in the way of his arrows, fierce as the conflagration that destroys the worlds, and they fled to their abode. Having wrested from them the beautiful city with all its wealth, the royal sage gave all that to the Wielder of the thunderbolt, and thus got his various names (11-19).

Puranjaya had a son Anenas; his son was Prthu. He had a son Viśvarandhi and he a son Chandra, whose son was Yuvanāśva. Yuvanāśva had a son Sābasta, who founded the city Sābasti. He had a son Brhadasva, whose son was Kuvalayāsvaka. To oblige the sage Utanka, the powerful King with his twenty-one thousand sons, slew the Asura named Dhundhu, and came to be known thereafter as Dhundhumāra. His sons were burnt up by the fire from the mouth of Dhundhu, all except three of them, known as Drdhāśva, Kapilāśva and Bhadrāśva, O scion of the Bhāratas. Drdhāśva's son was Haryaśva. He had a son, Nikumbha. He had a son Barhaṇāśva,

and he a son Kṛsāśva. His son was Senajit. He had a son Yuvanāśva, who, being without issue, went to the forest in despair, accompanied by his hundred wives. The sages, taking pity on him, conducted for him, with concentrated minds, a sacrifice to propitiate Indra. The King, feeling thirsty at night, entered the sacrificial hall and saw the Brahmanas sleeping. He drank the consecrated water. When they got up and found that the water pot was empty, they asked, 'My lord, who has done this thing, drinking up the water consecrated for effecting the birth of a male child?' Coming to know that it was the King who had drunk it under the prompting of destiny, they made their prostrations to the Lord, exclaiming, 'Ah, how wonderful! Destiny is all-powerful'. At the proper time, a son was born to Yuvanāśva, breaking out from his belly on the right side, and that son became an emperor. 'Alas, the child cries from hunger; who will give him to suck?' (wondered the grieving Brahmanas.) 'But he shall drink of me. Don't you weep, my child,' said Indra, as he gave him his forefinger to suck. By the grace of the god and the Brahmanas, his father was saved from death. Practising austerities there (in that hermitage), Yuvanāśva attained liberation (20-32).

The emperor Māndhātā, at the mere mention of whose name the evil Rākshasas and brigands, Rāvaṇa and others, quaked in terror, and to whom Indra therefore gave the name Trasaddasyu, ruled the earth with its seven island continents as sole overlord, my dear, because of his ability backed by Achyuta's puissance. Though he had realized the Self, he worshipped, with many sacrifices, paying ample fees, the Lord of the sacrifice, Who is all the gods and the Soul in all that exists, Who is beyond the reach of the senses, and of Whose substance are constituted all the substances used, the incantations uttered and the procedure followed in the sacrifice, and also the sacrifice itself, the sacrificer, the officiating priest, the Dharma (unseen fruit of the sacrifice), the time and the place. The whole of this earth, from where the sun rises to where it sets, belonged, it is said, to Māndhātā, son of Yuvanāśva. The King begot on Bindumati, the daughter of Śaśabindu, Puru-

kutsa, Ambarisha and the yogi Muchukunda. Their fifty sisters chose Soubhari for their spouse. Practising severe penance, plunged in the waters of the Yamunā, he saw how supremely happy the king of the fishes was, mating with his kind. And being possessed of a desire for similar pleasures, he begged the emperor to give him one of his daughters in marriage. He told him, 'You may marry, O Brahman, the girl who will have you.' He said to himself, 'He has (in effect) turned down my request, thinking that I would not be agreeable to women, who would dislike one who was old, wrinkled, grey-haired and nodding with age. I shall make myself so attractive that even celestial women will hanker after me, not to speak of the daughters of royalty.' The capable man, having thus resolved, was introduced by the chamberlain into the opulent women's apartments; and all the fifty daughters of the King chose him as their husband. And they, in their infatuation, quarrelled over him among themselves, discarding sisterly affection, and claiming, 'I alone am worthy of him, not you.' By virtue of the opulence gained through his endless austerities, he who had mastered the Ṛg-veda diverted himself with them in houses furnished with priceless furniture and fittings, as well as in many a charming grove, and on the banks of lakes of crystal-clear water, with their many beds of *kalhāra* flowers. In these houses he was waited upon by beautifully dressed men and women, while birds, bees and bards sang, and he was surrounded with all the luxury of costly couches and divans, rich raiment, ornaments, delightful baths, unguents, sumptuous food and flowers. Astonished at the opulence of his domestic life, the Lord of the seven island continents shed the pride of imperial pomp (33-47).

Thus addicted to house and home, and enjoying all pleasures, he (Soubhari) was not content, any more than fire is with drops of ghee. The teacher of the Ṛg-Veda fell to brooding one day, as he sat in his home, on the dissipation of his austerities caused by his mind dwelling with longing on what he had observed among the fish. 'Alas, look at the destruction of the austerities which I had long accumulated by my goodness and fidelity to vows! They have all been wiped out by my

excessive interest in the doings of fish under the water. The man who aspires to liberation should completely eschew association with those who lead the family life. He should not allow his senses to be beguiled by the world outside. Leading the solitary life, he should sit in a secluded place to concentrate his mind on the Supreme Lord, Ananta. Where association with others cannot be avoided, let it be with those who are of a saintly disposition and are dedicated in their devotion to the Lord. When I practised austerities I was but one. When I became interested in the doings of the fish in water, I became fifty. And from that I went on to five thousand births. There is no end to my preoccupation with the desires which drive me to action intended to produce results in this world and the next; my intelligence eclipsed by the products of Māyā, I have looked upon them as the end of life' (48-52).

Having thus lived in his home for a long time, he fell out of love with the world. Giving up all attachments, he then retired to the penitential woods. His wives, who looked upon their husband as their God, followed him. There the resolute man practised severe penance, which dried up the body, and merged himself along with the sacred fires in the Paramātman. His spouses, seeing their husband's merging in the Brahma, followed him by virtue of his puissance, O King, even as the tongues of flame die down when the fire is extinguished (53-55).

CHAPTER VII

THE STORY OF HARISCHANDRA

Srī Suka said: Māndhātā's son, Ambarīsha, of whom I have spoken, came to be regarded as the chief of his sons because he was adopted by his grandfather. His son was Yuvanāśva, whose son was Hārīta. These brought a special prestige to the line of Māndhātā. Narmadā was given away in marriage to Purukutsa by her brothers, the Uragas. And she, so directed by the king of the serpents, took him to Rasātala. There he, who possessed the power of Vishnu, slew the Gandharvas, who deserved death; and he got from the King

of the snakes the boon that those who remember this episode shall be immune from snake-bite. Trasaddasyu was the son of Purukutsa. His son was Anaranya. Haryaśva was the latter's son. His son was Aruṇa, and Aruṇa's son was Tribandhana. His son was Satyavrata, known to fame as Trisanku. Reduced to the state of a Chandāla by his Guru's curse, he was translated in the flesh to heaven by the puissance of Kauśika, and is to be seen in the sky to this day ; thrown down headlong by the gods, he was stopped in mid air and kept there by the power of Kauśika's austerities (1-6).

Trisanku's son was Harischandra, because of whom there was a great fight, which lasted for many years, between Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha, both of whom had been turned into birds. Being issueless and depressed on that account, he besought the grace of Varuṇa under Nārada's advice. He told him, 'If I get a son who is a valiant man, O Lord, I shall offer him as a sacrifice to you, great King.' Varuṇa granted him his wish, and he got a son Rohita by his grace. 'Now that a son has been born to you, my friend, sacrifice him to me.' The King replied, 'When the intended victim is ten days old, then only he becomes fit to be offered as sacrifice.' When the ten days were over, he came and told him, 'Now offer the sacrifice.' 'When the victim grows teeth, then only will he be fit to be sacrificed.' 'He has now got his teeth. Sacrifice him.' But he again put him off, saying, 'It is when the first teeth fall that he will be a fit sacrifice.' The first teeth of the intended victim fell, and Varuṇa told the father, 'Now offer the sacrifice.' 'When the victim's teeth grow again, he will be pure enough to be offered as sacrifice.' 'Now the new teeth have come up,' he told him, 'so offer him as sacrifice.' And he answered him, saying, 'It is when a Kshattriya is fit to wear armour that he becomes pure enough to be offered as a sacrifice.' Though he, under the compulsion of love for his son, thus went on evading his promise every time, the god agreed to the repeated postponements (7-15).

Rohita, coming to know what his father intended doing, escaped to the forest armed with the bow,

to save himself. On hearing that his father, possessed by Varuṇa, was suffering from dropsy, Rohita wanted to return home, but Indra stopped him and told him to go on a pilgrimage to holy places all over the earth. Doing so, he lived in the forest for a whole year. In the same manner the Slayer of Vṛtra, disguised as an old Brahmana, appeared to him in the second, third, fourth and fifth years also and repeated his advice. Having spent his sixth year there, Rohita returned to his city and bought from Ajigarta his second son. And giving Śunaśśepa to his father, to be offered as sacrifice, he made his prostrations to him. Thereupon Harischandra of the immense fame, who won the encomiums of the great, propitiated Varuṇa and other gods with a human sacrifice, and was rid of his disease. In that sacrifice Viśvāmitra officiated as Hotā, the self-controlled Jamadagni was Adhvaryu, Vasishta was Brahmā, and Ayāśya was the singer of the Sāman chants. Indra, pleased with him, gave him a chariot of gold. We shall later speak of the greatness of Sunaśśepa. Viśvāmitra, pleased with the constancy grounded in adherence to truth of the King and his wife, imparted to him the knowledge that leads unobstructed to liberation. Merging the mind in the earth, the earth in water, water in fire and fire in air, air in *ākāśa*, and *ākāśa* in the *tāmasa ahamkāra*, and that *ahamkāra* in the Mahat, he contemplated on the intellectual aspect of the Mahat as identical with the Ātman, burnt up by such contemplation the primordial nescience, and discarding contemplation in the realization of the bliss of the Self, was freed from all bondage ; and he rested in the Self, which is beyond the reach of logic and baffles description (16-17).

CHAPTER VIII

THE STORY OF SAGARA

Srī Suka went on : Harita was the son of Rohita. Champa was the son of Harita. He established the city of Champā. His son was Sudeva, whose son was Vijaya. His son was Bhāruka, whose son was Vṛka. The latter's son was Bāhuka. That King, driven out of his kingdom by enemies who had captured it, took

shelter in the forest with his wife. When he, an old man, died, his queen wanted to give up her life along with him, but was dissuaded from doing so by Aurva who saw that she was pregnant. Coming to know of this, her co-wives administered poison to her with her food. And with that poison was born Sagara, who became an emperor. His sons delved the ocean. In deference to the wishes of his Guru (Aurva) he did not slay (all) the Tāla-janghas, Yavanas, Sakas, Haihayas and Barbaras, but he had them disfigured. Some were made to shave off their heads, others had to shave off all but their beards and moustaches, while some had to wear their hair dishevelled, and others had to remain half-shaven. To some he forbade the wearing of underclothes, to others the wearing of outer garments (1-7).

He propitiated Hari, His own Self and Inner Ruler, Who is bodied forth as all the Vedas and all the gods, with the offering of horse sacrifices, according to the procedure advised by Aurva. Purandara carried off the horse that he was to offer up as sacrifice, when it was let loose to graze for a year. The proud sons of Sumati, obeying their father's bidding, went in search of the horse and dug up the earth on all sides. They found the horse in the North-East near Kapila. 'Here is the thief who walked away with the horse, sitting with his eyes closed—kill him, kill him, the wicked fellow !' cried the sixty thousand of them, rushing to the attack with upraised weapons. The sage opened his eyes. Deceived by Mahendra's wiles, they thus sinned against the mighty one and were slain by their own transgression, their bodies being reduced to ashes in a moment by their own (vital) heat. It is not true (as some have said) that the emperor's sons were burnt by the wrath of the sage. How can one associate anger, the product of *tamas*, with him who is the embodiment of *sattva* and who purifies the world, any more than one can think of the earth's dust as attaching to the sky ? It was he who propagated the Sāṅkhya Śāstra, that sturdy vessel by which the man who yearns for liberation traverses the formidable ocean of *samsāra*, the way to death. How could the omniscient sage, one with the Paramātmān, ever cherish the sense of difference ? (8-14).

The King had a son born of Keśinī, who was spoken of as Asamanjasa. He had a son Amśumān, who was devoted to the interests of his grandfather. Asamanjasa, who had in his previous birth been a yogi, but had strayed from the path by evil association, remembered his former birth, and therefore conducted himself now in a very unbecoming way, doing things which brought upon him the world's censure and the displeasure of his relations. He caused grief to the people by throwing into the Sarayū children who were at play. When he conducted himself thus, his father renounced him, setting aside his feeling of parental affection for him. Thereupon he brought back, by the power he had acquired through yoga, the children he had thrown into the river, and showed them to the people, and then left the place. The residents of Ayodhyā were astonished to see their children, who had come back, O King, and the King was filled with remorse (15-19).

Amśumān, commanded by the King, went in search of the horse, following the trail of his uncles who had dug up the earth, and he saw the horse near the ashes (of his uncles). The great one, seeing the sage named Kapila, who was none other than the Lord Who is beyond the reach of the senses, prostrated himself before Him, and with folded hands and a composed mind extolled him. He said, 'Even the Unborn (Brahmā) does not to this day know Thee, His paramount Overlord, either by direct experience in *samādhi* or by the discursive knowledge based on reasoning. How then could those who belong to the latter-day orders of creation effected by His mind, body and intellect, and especially, ignorant creatures like us? Men do not know Thee, though Thou art established within them in all Thy glory; because they are deluded by Thy Māyā, and being dependent on (the intellect, the product of) the three *guṇas*, have knowledge only of the outer world; they see only the objects of the senses, or not even these, but only *tamas*. How can I, bewildered and stupefied, inquire into the truth of Thee That art pure Jñāna, since Thou mayest be investigated only by sages like Sanandana and others, who are by their native disposition free from the notions of difference, and are untouched by the delusion

produced by the *guṇas* of Māyā? Therefore, O Lord That art established in tranquillity, we must needs content ourselves with making our prostrations to Thee, the Primordial Lord That displayest the attributes, the deeds and the forms of Māyā, though Thou hast neither name nor form, and art untouched by sin and merit alike, but hast now taken a body constituted of pure *sattva* in order to impart wisdom. Misled by the erroneous belief in the reality of domestic felicity and the like, men live bewildered in the world created by Thy Māyā, their minds deluded by desire, covetousness, jealousy, and infatuation. O Lord That art the Inner Ruler in all creatures, we have been enabled this day, by reason of Thy graciously showing Thyself to us, to sever the bond of infatuation with the body and the like, produced by desire and action in furtherance thereof through the instrumentality of the organs' (20-27).

Srī Suka said: When Amśumān thus extolled his greatness, the blessed sage Kapila spoke thus to him, bestowing his grace upon him, O King. The blessed one said: 'You can take with you, my child, this horse, which your grandfather intended to offer in his sacrifice. These uncles of yours, who have been burnt, should have Gangā water only, no other.' Propitiating him by walking round him in reverence and making his prostrations to him, he took the horse home. Sagarā, offering it up as sacrifice, finished the rite. Installing Amśumān as ruler of his kingdom, he, who had shed all desires and been freed from bondage, attained the supreme goal, following the path taught him by Aurva (28-31).

CHAPTER IX

DESCENT OF THE GANGĀ

Srī Suka said: Amśumān also engaged for long years in the practice of austerities with a view to bringing down the Gangā, but did not succeed. And he went the way of all flesh. His son Dileepa was similarly unsuccessful, and he too passed away. His son was Bhagirata, who practised severe austerities; pleased with which the Goddess (Gangā) appeared before him and told him, 'I shall grant you whatever you want.'

The King told her, with a humble bow, what he had in mind. 'Will any one be able to bear the force of my fall on earth? If there is none to do it, I shall break through the surface of the earth and enter Rasātala. Besides, I shall not go to the world of men. For men would wash all their sins into my waters. Where should I wash them off, O King? Think and tell me' (1-5).

Bhagīrata replied, 'Saintly souls, who have renounced all the fruits of action and won self-control, who know the true inwardness of the Veda, and who can purify the world, will, by bathing in your waters, purge them of their sins, since in those saints abides Hari, the Destroyer of all sins. And Rudra, the Soul in all creatures, on Whom the world is extended like the cloth on the warp and the woof, will stem the force of your fall.' Having said this, the King proceeded to propitiate the God Siva by his austerities. Within a very short time, O King, the Supreme Lord was pleased to bestow His grace on him. Siva, the well-wisher of all the worlds, agreed to do what the King wanted. With all due care He received on His head the water hallowed by the touch of Hari's foot. The royal sage Bhagīrata led the stream, which purifies the world, to where the bodies of his kinsmen, reduced to ashes, lay. Swiftly flowing in the wake of his chariot, which sped like the wind, she sanctified the regions on the way and wetted the bodies of Sagara's sons, who had been burnt. By the mere wetting of their ashes by her water, the sons of Sagara went to heaven, though they had been destroyed by their offence against the Brahma (in the person of Kapila). If Sagara's sons could thus gain heaven, merely by reason of their burnt bodies having been touched by her waters, who can doubt that they will do so, who take proper vows and make use of the waters of the celestial stream with faith? What has been narrated here about the divine stream that takes its rise from the lotus feet of Ananta, the Destroyer of the transmigratory travail, should cause no surprise; since the pure-hearted sages, who, fixing their minds wholly on Ananta with all reverence, abandon that attachment to the body, which it is so difficult to renounce, have become instantly one with Him (6-15).

Bhagīrata had a son Sruta, who had a son Nābha. His son was Sindhudvīpa. The latter had a son Ayutāyus, whose son was Rtuparṇa, the friend of Nāla, who learnt the art of managing horses from Nāla, imparting to him the secrets of the game of playing at dice. His son was Sarvakāma. His son was Sudāsa, who had a son, O King, who was the husband of Madayantī. The people knew him also as Mitrasaha and Kalmāshapāda. He once incurred the curse of Vasishṭa and became a Rākshasa and was issueless, in consequence of his own deed (16-18).

The King asked : 'How did the high-minded son of Sudāsa come to incur his Guru's curse? We should like to know. Be pleased to tell us, if there is no objection' (19).

Srī Suka said : Saudāsa, when out hunting, killed a Rākshasa, but let off his brother, who went away intent upon retaliation. Pondering on how he could harm the King, he served in the latter's house disguised as a cook : and when the King's preceptor wanted to eat, he cooked human flesh and served it to him. When the flesh was about to be served, the blessed sage saw that it was tabooed flesh, and being angry cursed the King, saying, 'You shall become a Rākshasa for doing this.' But on coming to know that it was the Rākshasa's doing, he modified the curse so that it should be operative only for twelve years. The King, too, took water in his cupped hands and was about to curse his Guru, but was prevented by Madayantī from doing so. Finding the four quarters, the sky and all the earth teeming with life, the King poured the water, that was bound to do harm, on his own feet, and they turned black. Having become *rākshasic* in disposition, he once saw a Brahmana couple, who were forest-dwellers, in the act of mating ; and ravenous with hunger, he seized the Brahmana. His wife piteously cried, 'You are not a Rākshasa, great lord, but the super-charioteer of the Ikshvākus and the husband of Madyantī ; you should not do what is unrighteous, O valiant one. I long to have a child ; give me my husband, the Brahmana who has not satisfied his desire yet. This body, O King, is the source of all blessings. Therefore the killing of the body has been described as

the destruction of all hopes of gaining the ends of life, O heroic one. This is a Brahmana who is learned, and endowed with the power of austerities, an excellent disposition and all virtues. He is desirous of worshipping the Brahma known as the Mahāpurusha (Vishnu), Who, though present in all creatures as their soul, is hidden from view by the products of the *guṇas*. How can this man, the foremost of Brahmarshis, deserve death at the hands of you that are first among the royal sages and well versed in Dharma, any more than a son deserves death at the hands of his father? How could you, who enjoy the esteem of the good, regard as right the killing of this good and innocent man, learned in the Veda and the Sāstra and a teacher thereof; it would be like killing a cow. If you are going to eat him, without whom I cannot live for a moment, eat me first, since I am as good as dead.' As she thus lamented and wept piteously in her helplessness, Saudāsa ate up the Brahmana as the tiger devours its victim, being bereft of his senses by reason of the curse. The Brahmana woman, on seeing her husband, who would have given her a child, gobbled up by the Rākshasa, grieved for herself, and in her anger cursed the King. 'As you have eaten up my husband, O wicked one, when I was yearning for love, know from me, you, benighted creature, that your death will come from sexual intercourse' (20-36).

Having thus cursed Mitrasaha, she, who desired to go to the world to which her husband had gone, threw his bones into the fire that she lit, and attained that world. When, freed from the curse at the end of twelve years, he (the King) wanted to have sexual intercourse with his wife, his queen stopped him, having heard of the Brahmana woman's curse. Thereafter he gave up the pleasures of sex, and thus by reason of his own act remained without issue. At his request Vasishṭa raised for him progeny on Madayantī. She contained the foetus in her womb for seven years and did not bring it forth. He (Vasishṭa) thereupon struck her belly with a stone. The child then born was known as Aśmaka. To Aśmaka was born Mūlaka, who was protected by women (from Paraśurāma). Known as Nārīkavacha, he became the regenerator of the Kshattriya race, when it had been

extirpated (by Paraśurāma). He had a son Daśaratha, whose son was Aidavida. His son was the King Viśvasāha, whose son Khatvāṅga became an emperor (37-41).

He, who was invincible, slew Daityas in battle, entreated by the gods. On coming to know that he had but an hour to live, he returned to his city and fixed his mind on the Supreme Lord with this prayer : ' I have held nothing dearer than the Brahmana race, whom my family revered as God Himself. Neither my sons, nor my wealth, neither the earth nor my kingdom, nor my wives have been as dear to me. Even in childhood my mind never delighted in unrighteousness. Nor did I look upon anything but the illustrious Lord as real. The gods who rule over the three worlds were prepared to give me whatever I asked for. I did not ask for any boon, loving as I did the Lord Who loves all creatures. Even these gods do not know the Lord Who is ensconced in their hearts as their own Self and Who is the eternal Beloved, because their senses and their minds are always distracted ; how then could others ? Therefore, freeing myself, by my devotion to the Creator of the worlds, from the attachment implanted in us by nature to the objects of the senses, which are the product of the Lord's Māyā and are like the phantom city of the Gandharvas, I seek refuge in the Lord.' Having thus resolved, as the result of his mind being wholly devoted to Nara-yana, he was freed from the ignorance that looks upon the non-Self as the Self, and he established himself in his own essence, which was none other than the transcendent Brahma, subtler than the subtlest, Which is not a void, though it seems so, and Which the devotees of the Lord extol as the exalted Lord Vāsudeva (42-49).

CHAPTER X

THE INCARNATION OF SRI RAMA

Sri Suka said : Khatvāṅga's son was Deerghabāhu. His son was Raghu of the world-wide renown. His son was the great King Aja, and his son Daśaratha. The exalted Lord Hari, Who is none other than the perfect Brahma, was born to him as his son, taking four forms, as an *amsā* and *amsās* thereof, in response to

the prayer of the gods, the sons bearing the names of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna. You have repeatedly heard the story of the consort of Sita described elaborately by seers who had realized the Truth. May that great King of Kosala be our refuge, who, for the sake of his father, gave up his kingdom and trudged from forest to forest on those feet which were too delicate to bear even the touch of his beloved's hands, the fatigue of the way being assuaged for him by the great ape (Hanumān), and his own younger brother; whose anger at the separation from his dearly loved wife, which followed the disfiguring of Sūrpanakhā, brought a frown to his face which terrified the god of ocean; who built a bridge across the ocean and was the forest fire that destroyed a whole host of evil creatures. In the sacrifice offered by Viśvāmitra he punished Mārīchā and other Rākshasa chiefs, as Lakshmana looked on. In the great hall where were assembled world-renowned warriors for Sita's free choice of a husband, he handled the fierce bow of Iśa (Siva) which had to be carried there by three hundred men, as playfully as the young tusker snaps the sugar-cane, O King; he strung it, and drawing it, broke it in the middle. And when, having won her who went by the name of Sita, but was none other than the Goddess Sri herself—who is exalted by being lodged on his breast—and who was a perfect match for him in virtue, disposition, age, figure and beauty, he was returning home, he humbled the overweening pride of the chief of the Bhrgus, who had thrice (seven times) emptied the earth of the very seed of kings. He received on his head the command of his father, who, the slave of a woman's will, had been bound hand and foot by his plighted word; and giving up the kingdom and opulence, and leaving those who loved him and those who were his well-wishers, he quitted his abode and went to the forest with his wife, as the yogi who has given up all attachment departs this life. He caused the disfigurement of the sister of the Rākshasa (Rāvaṇa) who harboured dirty thoughts, and armed with the bow which none could withstand, he slew fourteen thousand relations of hers, Khara, Dūshana and the rest; and wandering in that wilderness, led a hard life. Lured from

his hermitage by Mārīcha, who appeared before him taking the form of a marvellous deer, having been sent by the Ten-headed (Rāvaṇa) whose heart was afire with passion for Sita from what he had heard of her, he swiftly slew him, O King, as Śrī Rudra had slaughtered Dakṣha. When the vile Rākshasa had carried off like a wolf the daughter of the King of Videha when no-one was looking, he, deprived of his beloved, wandered with his brother in the forest disconsolately like one forlorn, showing to the world the fate reserved for those who give their attachment to women. Having cremated him (Jatāyu) who had been killed fighting in his interest, and for whom he did the last offices of piety (like a son) as laid down in the Sāstras, he slew Kabandha, made friends with the monkeys and ascertained through them, after Vāli had been slain, the whereabouts of his beloved. Then he, the man whose feet were worshipped by Aja and Bhava, reached the shore of the ocean, leading the armies of the King of the apes. The sea, its obstreperousness stilled by fear, its alligators and giant fish thrown into a panic by a glance from his eyes in seeming wrath, came to him in human form, carrying on its head *arghya* and other articles of worship, and abasing itself at his lotus feet spoke as follows : ' We dull-witted creatures did not, O Lord That art infinitely great, know Thee truly as Thou art, the Primal Cause and the Immutable and Supreme Ruler of all the worlds, and the Ruler of the *guṇas*; the gods being created from *sattva*, the Patriarchs and progenitors from *rajas*, and the Lords of the elementals from *tamas*. Please go and slay him, whom Viśravas voided, and who makes the three worlds wail, and retrieve, O hero, Thy spouse. Build a bridge here, that shall spread Thy fame far and wide ; monarchs who come and see it in the course of their world-conquest shall sing Thy fame ' (1-15).

The Lord of the race of Raghus built a bridge across the sea with the peaks of many a mountain, with the trees on them, whose boughs and branches were shaken by the hands of the great monkey chiefs ; and he entered Lankā, already burnt (by Hanumān), along with the armies headed by Sugrivā, Nīla and Hanumān, guided by the wisdom of Vibheśhaṇa. Lankā, with its playing

grounds, granaries, treasuries, doorways, city-gates, assembly halls, sloping roofs, and dove-cots overrun by the forces of the King of the apes, and its altars, flagstaves, golden pots, and cross-roads devastated, was agitated like a pool trampled by elephant herds. Seeing that, the ruler of the Rākshasas sent against them Nikumbha, Kumbha, Dhūmrāksha, Durmukha, Devāntaka, Narāntaka, his son (Indrajit), Prahasta, Atikāya, Vikampana and other retainers of his, and then Kumbhakarna. Rama, accompanied by Sugriva, Lakshmana, the son of the Wind-god (Hanumān), Gandhamādana, Nila, Angada, the bear (Jāmbavān), Panasa and others, advanced against that unapproachable Rākshasa force, bristling with sword, spear, bow and arrow, dart, double-edged sword, javelin, lance and scimitar. The chiefs of the army of the Lord of the Raghus, Angada and others, engaged in hand to hand fights with the Rākshasa army, composed of elephant forces, infantry, chariots and cavalry, and using trees, rocks, maces and arrows, slew those who owed allegiance to Rāvaṇa, who had forfeited his luck by laying violent hands on Sita. The ruler of the Rākshasas, incensed by the destruction of his forces, got into his car (the Pushpaka), and advanced upon Rama, who shone seated in his burnished car, brought from heaven by Mātali, and assailed him with razor-sharp darts. Rama reviled him, saying, 'O foul Rākshasa dung, since you, vile wretch, stole my spouse like a dog when I was away, I, whose power none may withstand any more than one may withstand death, shall let you have this day the fruit of your shameless and disgraceful deed.' Thus daunting him, he despatched the arrow fitted in his bow, and it split his breast like the thunderbolt. And he, vomiting blood with his ten mouths, fell from his car, as all who looked on cried 'Alas !' even as the man who has dissipated the fruit of his good deeds falls from his aerial mansion (in heaven) (16-23).

Thereupon thousands of Rākshasis issued from Lankā along with Mandodari, weeping and wailing, and ran towards the battle-field. Embracing their relations who had fallen, struck down by Lakshmana's arrows, they in their misery beat their breasts and wept

aloud. 'Alas, we are undone, O Rāvaṇa, our lord, who made the worlds wail ! With whom shall Lankā take refuge, having lost you, when it is being beset by the foe ? Infatuated by passion, you did not know, O mighty one, how tremendous was Sītā's power, which has brought you to this pass. You have been the cause of this Lankā's being widowed, as well as us, O Delight of your race ; of your body becoming food for vultures and your soul being consigned to hell' (24-28).

Srī Suka said : Vibheeshana, with the permission of the King of Kosala, did the funeral rites for his kin, according to the procedures prescribed for the offering of oblations to the manes. Then the exalted Lord beheld Sita under the *śimsapā* tree in the hermitage within the garden of *asoka* trees, worn to a shadow from the pangs of separation from him. Rama was moved to loving compassion at the piteous plight of his supremely beloved spouse, whose lotus face beamed with pleasure on seeing him. Along with Hanumān and his 'brothers' (Lakshmana and Sugrīva), he got into the aerial car, first putting Sita in it. Having made Vibheeshana ruler of the Rākshasas, and given him Lankā and the boon of a life on earth which should last to the end of the *Kalpa*, the exalted one, his vow fulfilled, went to his own city, showered with flowers on the way by the Guardians of the worlds, his exploits gladly extolled by Brahmā and others. Hearing how his brother Bharata lived, clad in tree-bark, subsisting on barley boiled in cow's urine, wearing his hair matted and sleeping on the bare ground, the supremely compassionate Lord greatly grieved. Hearing of his brother's arrival, Bharata left his camp in Nandigrāma and went to receive him, placing his sandals on his head. He was accompanied by the citizens, officials and chief Priest. With song and music playing, and the loud and prolonged recitation of the Vedas by those well-versed in them ; with gilt-edged banners flying ; with chariots decked with gold and flags carrying curious designs, and drawn by splendid horses caparisoned in gold ; with armed men clad in armour inlaid with gold ; with the representatives of artisans' guilds, and prominent courtesans, and numberless retainers, he went taking with him the

insignia of imperial power, and offerings of every kind. Placing the sandals before him, he fell at his feet, his heart melting with love, his eyes moist. Then, with folded hands he stood before him, his eyes brimming with tears. Rama held him in a long embrace, bathing him with his tears (29-40).

Rama made his prostrations, along with Lakshmana and Sita, to the Brahmanas and to others who were worthy of his high regard, and himself received the obeisance of his subjects. The people of Uttarakosala, looking at their King who had returned after a long absence, danced with joy, waving their upper garments and showering him with flowers. Bharata bore the sandals, Vibheeshana and Sugriva waved the two fly-whisks. Hanuman (the son of Vayu) held the white umbrella. Satrugna carried the bow and the two quivers, and Sita the full water-pot. Angada held the sword, and the King of the bears (Jambavan) the shield inlaid with gold, O King. Sitting in the Pushpaka, attended by women, and panegyricized by the bards, the Lord shone, O King, like the moon risen with the planets. Welcomed by his brothers, he entered the city which was *en fete*. Entering the royal palace, he honoured his father's spouses, his own mother, and his preceptors. And he greeted his friends and those who were younger in age in a fitting manner, and was appropriately welcomed. Vaidehi and Lakshmana likewise paid their respects and offered their greetings in due order. The mothers, rising upon seeing their sons, as the body does when life returns, put them on their laps and bathed them with their tears, and thus shed their grief (41-48).

When his matted locks had been removed, his Guru (Vasishta), along with the family elders, gave him the consecratory bath according to the rules, as Indra had been bathed, with water brought from the four oceans and from sacred streams. Then, clad in fine raiment, suitably adorned with wreath and ornaments, he shone in the company of his brothers and his wife, who were similarly attired and adorned. Humbly requested by his brother with bowed head, he occupied the throne, and like a father protected his subjects, who were devoted to their own Dharma and were endowed with the qualities

characteristic of their *varṇas* and *āśramas*; and they too looked upon him as their father. Though it was the Tretā-yuga then, the time when Rama ruled as King exhibited all the qualities of the Kṛta-yuga, since he, who know the true inwardness of Dharma, secured the happiness of all creatures. Forests, rivers, mountains, the sub-divisions of the continent, the islands and the inland seas yielded to the people all that the heart could desire, O first of the Bharatas. When Rama, the Lord Who is beyond the reach of the senses, was King, mental and physical ailments, old age, depression, grief, sorrow, fear and fatigue were unknown, nor did death visit those who did not want it. Vowed to monogamy, following the mode of life of royal sages, maintaining his personal purity and leading the householder's life, he set an example to others in the practice of his own Dharma. And Sitā captivated her husband's heart by her love, solicitous attentions, virtuous disposition, humility, intelligence and modesty, and by her ability to divine his wishes (49-56).

CHAPTER XI

SITA GOES INTO EXILE

Srī Suka said : The exalted Lord Rama, under the guidance of his preceptor, propitiated the Supreme Lord, Who is all the gods and Who was none other than himself, with the offering of sacrifices in which the highest means and materials were employed. At the conclusion the Lord gave away the kingdoms in the east to the Hotā, those in the south to the Brahmā, those in the west to the Adhvaryu and those in the north to the Chanter of the Sāman. And to his preceptor he gifted all the rest of the earth that lay between these, being convinced that the Brahmana, who is without craving, alone deserves all this. Thus he had nothing left but his ornaments and clothing; and likewise his queen, Vaidehi, had only her auspicious wedding-string. When they saw how much he, the Lord who was devoted to the Brahmanas, loved them, a love which won for him the acclaim of the good, they were pleased and greatly moved. Returning to him all that he had

given them, they told him, 'What is there that you have not given us, O Lord and Ruler of the universe, since you have entered our hearts and dispelled the darkness of ignorance by your splendour? We make our salutations to Rama, the deity who is devoted to the Brahmana, whose intelligence is never at fault, who is foremost among the illustrious, whose feet the sages who have abjured all violence cherish in their hearts' (1-7).

Once Rama, going out into the city incognito at night to ascertain what the people were thinking, heard a certain person say to his wife, 'I shall not keep you, a wicked and unchaste woman, who has lived in another's house. Rama, being head over ears in love with his wife, might take back Sitā; I will not take you back'. Discarded by her husband, who feared the opinion of the ignorant world, which speaks with many voices and is hard to please, she reached the hermitage of Vālmiki. She, who was pregnant, gave birth in due time to twins, who came to be known as Lava and Kuśa. The sage did all auspicious rites for them. Lakshmana had two sons Angada and Chitraketu. Bharata's sons were Taksha and Pushkala, O King. Subāhu and Srutasena were Satrughna's sons. In a campaign of world conquest Bharata vanquished millions of Gandharvas. And he brought all their wealth and gave it to his brother. Satrughna slew Lavaṇa, the son of the Rākshasa Madhu, and established the city of Mathurā in Madhuvana. Sitā, exiled by her spouse, entrusted her sons to the care of the sage, and entered an opening in the earth, with her mind fixed on Rama's feet. On hearing of it, the exalted Lord Rama, though he controlled his grief by the exercise of discrimination, could not, for all his divinity, keep back his tears, as he dwelt on her noble qualities. Excessive attachment between men and women is productive of (grief and) fear in all circumstances. When even those who are capable of controlling their own destiny are thus affected, what wonder that the vulgar, whose hearts are bound up with their families, should suffer thus? (8-17).

The all-powerful one, observing the vow of celibacy, continued to perform the fire-rite without a break for thirteen thousand years. Then, leaving in the hearts

of those who remember him the imprint of those feet, tender as new shoots, which were pricked by the thorns of the Dandaka forest, he went to his eternal home. The slaying of the Rākshasas with a flood of arrows, and the restraining of the sea, could hardly exalt the glory of the Chief of the Raghus, the Lord who had adopted a mortal body in the spirit of play at the request of the gods. Were apes really needed to help him whose puissance knew neither peer nor superior? I seek refuge in him, the Chief of the Raghus, whose spotless fame shines in the farthest reaches of the earth, like the plates that adorn the foreheads of the elephants of the cardinals, and destroys the sins of those who hear of it, and is sung to this day by the sages in the audience-halls of kings; while his feet are touched by the crowns of the gods and of kings. All the people of Kosala, who had ever touched him, or seen him, or had been seated by his side, or followed him, reached that goal which the yogis attain. The man who hears and treasures in his heart the story of Rama, with a mind that has won serenity, is freed from the bondage of *karma*, O King (18-23).

The King asked, 'How did the exalted Lord Rama conduct himself? And how did he treat his brothers, who were fractions of his own self? And how did they, His brothers, as well as his subjects and citizens, conduct themselves towards him, their sovereign Lord?' (24).

Sri Suka answered: Ascending the throne, he (the Ruler of the three worlds) sent out his brothers on an expedition of world conquest. And showing himself to his own people, he went about the city with his retainers attending upon him. With its highways watered with scented water and the elephants' ichor, the city seemed intoxicated with delight as it were, at seeing its master who had come back. It was decorated with golden pots placed on the tops of mansions, city gateways, assembly halls, temples and other places of worship, and with flags and buntings, and for auspiciousness, with areca-nut saplings loaded with bunches of fruits and, plantain saplings, and festoons made of splendid scarves, mirrors, fine raiment and wreaths. The citizens, carrying presents, waited upon him everywhere and pro-

nounced blessings : 'Protect the earth, O Lord, which you lifted up in the far past.' Desiring to see him, their king returned after a long absence, his subjects, men and women alike, climbed up to the tops of great mansions, and showered him of the lotus eyes with flowers ; they could not feast their eyes enough. Then he entered his own home, where the Kings, his ancestors, had lived. It was rich with every kind of treasure in endless profusion, and priceless furniture and fittings. It had doorways with thresholds of coral. There were rows upon rows of pillars made of cat's-eye ; the floors were of emerald and the gleaming walls, of pure crystal. It was decorated with a variety of wreaths and ribbons, and shone with the splendour of raiment and gems in profusion, and of great pearls (with which pillars and walls were studded). It was adorned with an abundance of all objects of enjoyment and the fragrance of incense, and lights. And it was peopled with men and women who were decked with flowers and were godlike in their beauty and added attraction to the jewels they wore. In that palace, the exalted Lord Rama, foremost of the heroes who delight in the Self, enjoyed himself in the company of Sita, who loved him and whom he loved as the spouse who was most after his heart. And there, for hundreds of years he, whose tender feet were contemplated by men, enjoyed all pleasures in their season without detriment to Dharma (25-36).

CHAPTER XII

SRI RAMA'S DESCENDANTS

Sri Suka said : Kuśa had a son Atithi. His son was Nishadha ; and he had a son Nabha. Nabha's son was Pundarika, and the latter's son was Kshemadhanvā. He had a son Devānika, whose son was Aniha. Aniha's son was Pāriyātra. His son was Balasthala. His son was Vajranābha, who was an *amsa* of the sun-god. His son was Khagaṇa, whose son was Vidhrti. The latter's son was Hirānyanābha, who was a disciple of Jaimini and a teacher of Yoga, from whom the sage Kauśalya Yājnyavalkya learnt the Yoga of the Self, which brings

one extraordinary powers and helps to cut the knot of the heart (1-4).

Pushya was the son of Hiranyanābha, and his son was Dhruvasandhi. His son was Sudarśana, whose son was Agnivarṇa. His son was Sighra, and he had a son Maru. He (Maru), perfected in Yoga, is settled in Kalāpagrāma. At the end of the Kali Age he will resuscitate the Solar Race, which will have become extinct. To him was born Praśuśruta, whose son was Sandhi. The latter had a son, Amarshaṇa. His son was Mahasvān. He had a son Viśvasāhva. His son was Prasenajit, to whom was born Takshaka. His son was Brhadbala, who was killed by your father in battle (5-8).

These are the past rulers of the Ikshvāku line ; now hear of those to come. Brhadbala will have a son Brhadraṇa. His son will be Ūrukriya, who will have a son Vatsavṛddha. His son will be Prativyoma, who will have a son Bhānu. The latter's son will be Divāka, leader of the hosts. His son Sahadeva will have a valiant son Brhadaśva. He will have a son Bhānumān. The latter will have a son Pratikāśva, and he a son Supratika. The latter will have a son Marudeva, and he a son Sunakshatra. The latter will have a son Pushkara. He will have a son Antariksha. His son Sutapas will have a son Amitrajit. He will have a son Brhadrajas, and he a son Barhis. The latter will have a son Kṛtanjaya, He will have a son Raṇanjaya, and he a son Sanjaya. His son Sākhyā will have a son Suddhoda, whose son will be known as Lāngala. His will have a son Prasenajit, and he a son Kshudraka. His son Raṇaka will have a son Suratha. With his son Sumitra the line will come to an end. Those above enumerated constitute the line descended from Brhadbala. Sumitra will thus be the last of the Ikshvāku kings. With him that ruling race will come to an end in the Kali Age (9-16).

CHAPTER XIII

THE LINE OF NIMI

Sri Suka said : Nimi, the son of Ikshvāku, began a sacrifice and requested Vasishta to conduct it as the priest. He told him, ' I have been already requested

by Sakra to officiate at a sacrifice. Wait till I finish it and return.' The householder did not reply, and he (Vasishta) conducted Indra's sacrifice. The wise Nimi, knowing life to be uncertain and fleeting, began his sacrifice before his Guru returned, and had it conducted by other priests. His preceptor, on returning after completing Indra's sacrifice, saw his disciple's transgression and cursed him saying, 'Let Nimi, who is vain of his learning, die.' Nimi retaliated with a curse upon his Guru for violating Dharma, saying, 'Since you out of covetousness acted as if you did not know Dharma, you too shall die.' Thus Nimi, who was well-versed in the lore of the Self, laid down his body; while our great-grandfather (Vasishta) was reborn of Urvaśī as the son of Mitra and Varuṇa (1-6).

The great sages, preserving the body (of Nimi) by embalming it, made a request to the gods, at the end of the Sattrā sacrifice, at which they were present: 'If you are pleased with the King, and can restore him to life, please do it.' The gods acceded to their request, but Nimi said, 'Let me not be united again with the body, a union which the sages do not want, because they fear the inevitable separation, and that is why they worship the lotus feet of the Lord Hari. I do not wish to take a body, which brings with it sorrow, suffering and fear, and which finds death everywhere, as fish do in water.' The gods said, 'Let him remain without a body, dwelling in the eyes of all men. Being thus present in the eyes, his presence shall be known by the winking of the eyelids' (7-11).

The great sages, fearing anarchy, churned the body of Nimi, and a young boy was born of it. Because of the extraordinary mode of his birth he was known as Janaka. By reason of his being born to one who was without a body, he was known as Vaideha. Because he was born from the churning of the body, he was known as Mithilā. It was he who founded the city of Mithilā. His son was Udāvasu. He had a son Nandivardhana. He had a son Suketu, and he a son Devarāta, O King, Devarāta had a son Br̥hadratha. His son was Mahāvīrya, who was the father of Sudhṛt. Sudhṛt's son was Dhṛshtaketu. His son was Haryasva, whose son

was Maru. Maru's son was Pratipaka. To him was born Kṛtiratha. He had a son Devamidha. He had a son Viśruta, and he a son Mahādhṛti. Kṛtirāta was his son, and he had a son Mahāromā. His son was Svānaromā and he had a son Hṛsvaromā. His son was Seerādhwaja. He came to be known by that name, since, as he was ploughing the ground where he proposed to offer a sacrifice, Sita was found in the furrow. His son was Kuśādhwaja, and he had a son Dharmādhwaja, who had two sons Kṛtādhwaja and Mitādhwaja. Kṛtādhwaja's son was Keśidhwaja, and Mitādhwaja had a son Khāndikya. The son of Kṛtādhwaja was well-versed in the lore of the Self, O King, Khāndikya was learned in ritual. Being afraid of Keśidhwaja, he ran away (from the kingdom). Bhānumān was the son of Keśidhwaja; his son was Śatadyumna. Suchi was his son. He had a son Śanādwaja. He had a son Ūrdhvaketu, whose son was Aja. And Aja had a son Purujit. His son was Arishtanemi, and he had a son Śrutāyus, and he a son Supārśvaka. His son was Chitraratha, whose son Kṣhemadhi ruled in Mithilā. His son was Samaratha. He had a son Satyaratha. To him was born Upagūru. His son was Upagūpta, born of a fraction of the fire-god. He had a son Vasvananta, whose son was Yuyūdha, and he had a son, Subhāṣaṇa. His son was Śruta and his son was Jaya. He had a son Vijaya, whose son was Rta. Sunaka was Rta's son. His son was Veetahavya. He had a son Dhṛti. The latter had a son Bahulāśva, and his son was Kṛti, who had a son Mahāvaśi. These kings who ruled in Mithila, O King, were all well-versed in the Science of the Self, and though remaining as householders were freed from the sway of the pairs of opposites, being vouchsafed the grace of master-yogis like Yājñyavalkya (12-27).

CHAPTER XIV

THE KINGS OF THE LUNAR RACE

Śrī Suka said : You shall now hear, O King, of the hallowed line of Kings descended from the moon-god, among whom are mentioned Aila and other Kings of sacred renown. The Creator, who was born from the

lotus in the lake-like navel of the Lord of the thousand heads, had a son Atri, who was comparable to his father in his virtues. Out of his tears of joy was born a son Soma, who was of the substance of nectar. He was appointed by Brahmā as King over the Brahmanas, herbage, and the stars and other such luminaries. Having conquered the three worlds, he offered a Rājasūya sacrifice. And in his overweening pride he forcibly abducted Tārā, the wife of Brhaspati. When he in his arrogance would not let her go, though repeatedly begged by the preceptor of the gods, there broke out a war on that account between the gods and the Asuras. Sukra, because of his enmity to Brhaspati, took up the cause of the moon-god, aided by the Asuras. Hara, followed by the hosts of all the spirits and elementals, took up the cause of His Guru's son from His affection for him. And Mahendra, followed by the hosts of the gods, supported his preceptor (Brhaspati). And in that war on account of Tārā, the gods and the Asuras slew each other. The Creator of the worlds, being made aware of the fact by Angiras, threatened Soma (with dire penalties) and gave Tārā back to her husband. The latter then came to know that she was with child. 'Cast out at once the child begotten by another on you, who should bear my children, vile woman. I will not reduce you to ashes, you wicked creature, because you are a woman, and I wish to have a son.' Tārā, abashed, brought forth a boy who shone like gold. Both the son of Angiras and Soma loved the child and wanted him. While they loudly disputed among themselves, claiming, 'He is mine, not yours', the sages and the gods asked her, but from shame she would not speak. The boy told her in anger, 'Why do you not speak out, you immoral woman? Why this false modesty? Tell me at once about your misconduct.' Brāhmā questioned her in private and persuaded her to speak. She with great hesitation told him that the boy was Soma's. And Soma straightway took him. To him the Self-born gave the name Budha. And the moon-god was delighted to find that his son had a profound intellect (1-14).

To Budha was born Purūravas of Ilā, as has been already described. The celestial nymph Uryasī, hearing

in Indra's palace the glowing accounts given by the celestial sage (Nārada) of his beauty, virtues, generosity, amiable disposition, wealth and valour, approached him, smitten by the shafts of love. Condemned by the curse of Mitra and Varuṇa to entertain love for a mortal, the lovely woman had come to hear of this best of men who was beautiful as the god of love. Screwing up her courage, she waited upon him. The King, as he looked at the goddess with eyes that opened wide in delight, was thrilled, and he spoke to her sweetly. The King said: 'Welcome, lovely lady, be pleased to take a seat. What can I do for you? Let us be happy together, and love each other for endless years' (15-19).

Urvaśī replied: 'Where is the woman whose mind and eye will not linger upon you, O handsome man? Having once glimpsed your breast, they, avid for pleasure, can never turn away from it, O King. You who exalt me by your love should take care of these two rams, looking upon them as a trust. I shall live with you in happy enjoyment. Women choose for their husbands only those who excel by their qualities. I shall subsist solely on clarified butter, O valiant one. And I must never see you naked except when we are making love.' And the high-minded man agreed to these conditions, exclaiming, 'Ah, what splendid beauty, and what superb love, which must bewitch the world of men! Where is the man who will not give himself to a goddess who comes to him of her own accord?' With her, who gave him all the delights that he deserved, that best of men diverted himself in the pleasure-haunts of the gods such as Chaitraratha. Living in bliss with the celestial nymph, who exuded the scent of lotus filaments, he spent long years happily, lost in the ecstasy of savouring the sweetness of her mouth (20-25).

Indra, not seeing Urvaśī, urged the Gandharvas to look for her. 'Without Urvaśī my court is lifeless.' They came at midnight, when it was pitch dark, and carried off Urvaśī's rams, which she had entrusted to the King. She heard the cry of the rams, which were dear to her as her own children, as they were being carried off. She taunted the King, saying 'Alas, I am undone, looking for protection to a worthless man who behaves

like a eunuch, though he boasts of his valour ! Believing in him, I have lost my children, whom robbers have carried off, while he, who flaunts his manhood in day-time, lies down in craven fear at night like any woman' (26-29).

Thus assailed by her verbal shafts, like the tusker by the goad, he snatched his sword in anger and ran out naked at dead of night. The Gandharvas promptly let the rams go and produced a lightning flash ; and she saw her lover naked as he was returning with the rams. The son of Ilā, not finding his wife in bed, was exceedingly unhappy. With his mind always on her and his heart in a turmoil, he wandered all over the world like a madman in his grief. Seeing her at Kurukshetra on the bank of the Sarasvati, when she was accompanied by five joyous companions, Purūravas entreated her in these appealing words : ' O my wife, stop, do, you should not leave me to this terrible suffering, without getting from me all the satisfaction I can give you. Let us talk long and intimately. This beautiful bboy of mine, which you have dragged here all this long way, will fall here, and wolves and vultures will feed on that which failed to win your grace' (30-35).

Urvaśī told him, ' You must not die. You are a man. Let not these wolves devour you. Women give their friendship to none. They have the hearts of wolves. They are pitiless, cruel, and intolerant, and stop at no outrage in the pursuit of their ends. Even for a trivial thing they will murder the husband who trusts them, or their own brother. Heartless harlots deceive fools who put their trust in them, and live as they please, wanting a new lover every day. At the end of the year you shall, my lord, spend a night with me, and you shall have other sons too ' (36-39).

Perceiving that the goddess was with child, he returned to his city. He went back to that place at the end of a year and spent a joyful night with Urvaśī, who was now accompanied by her son. Then she told him, who was miserable, thinking of the impending separation, ' Propitiate these Gandharvas, they will give me to you.' They were pleased with him when he praised them, and gave him a fire-container, O King. He

thought that it was Urvaśi herself, but wandering with it in the forest, realized the truth (that it was only a fire-pot). He left the pot in the forest, and went home. As he lay of nights thinking of her, the Tretā-yuga set in, and knowledge of the three Vedas (that teach ritual) dawned on his mind. Going to the place where he had left the fire-vessel, he saw that a peepul tree had grown on the stock of a *samī* tree. Desiring to go to the world of Urvaśi, he had two fire-sticks made of the peepul. Meditating on the lower one as Urvaśi, on the upper one as himself, and on the piece of wood placed between the two as the son to be born to them, as the *mantra* provides, he rubbed the fire-sticks. From the churning came fire, Jātavedas, so called because it is 'the bestower of enjoyment'. Invested with a three-fold form by a sacrament prescribed in the Vedas, it was adopted by the King as his son. Desiring to gain the world of Urvaśi, he utilized it to worship Hari, the exalted Lord, the Lord of the sacrifice, Who is beyond the reach of the senses and Who is all the gods. Before that time, in the Kṛta-yuga, the Veda was only one; it consisted of the Praṇava, which was the seed as it were of all speech. And there was only one God, Narayana, and none else; there was only one fire, and one *varṇa*. It was from Purūravas that the Veda issued as three at the beginning of the Tretā-yuga, O King. By virtue of adopting fire as his son, that King went to the world of the Gandharvas (40-49).

CHAPTER XV

THE CAREER OF PARASURĀMA

Śrī Suka said: Aila (Purūravas) had six sons, born of Urvaśi, O King; they were named Āyu, Śrutāyu, Satyāyu, Raya, Vijaya and Jaya. Vaśumān was the son of Śrutāyu, and Srujanjaya the son of Satyāyu. Raya had a son named Eka, and Jaya a son known as Amita. Vijaya had a son Bhīma. The latter had a son Kānchana, whose son was Hotraka. His son was Jahnu, who drank up the Gangā, swallowing it in one draught. Jahnu's son was Puru. His son was Balāka, who had a son Ajaka. His son was Kuśa. The latter had four sons, Kuśāmbu,

Mūrtaraya, Vasu and Kuśanābha. Gādhi was the son of Kuśāmbu (1-4).

The Brāhmaṇa Rchika solicited of him the hand of his daughter Satyavati. Gādhi thought him not good enough as a match for his daughter, and told the scion of the Bhṛgu, 'You should give us a bride-price of a thousand horses, bright as the moon all over, except for one ear, which should be black. Remember, we are Kauśikas'. He (Rchika) saw what he really had in mind. He went to Varuṇa, and got the thousand horses and gave them (to Gādhi) and married the beautiful Satyavati. The sage's wife and her mother both desired children, and besought his help. The sage prepared two *charus*, to the incantation of different sets of *mantras*; and then went for his bath. When he was away, Satyavati gave to her mother the *charu* intended for herself, because the latter, imagining that it must be superior, begged for it; while she ate what was intended for her mother. Coming to know of this, the sage told his wife, 'You have done a grave wrong. You shall have a son who would be dreaded as a ruthless chastiser of the erring, but your brother will be the foremost of the knowers of the Brahma.' Entreated by Satyavati, who did not want this, he said, 'Well, then, you shall have a grandson of such a character.' Then his son Jamadagni was born. And Satyavati became the extremely sacred stream Kauśikī, which sanctifies the world (5-12).

Jamadagni married Reṇukā, the daughter of Reṇu. Of her were born to the scion of the Bhṛgu a number of sons, of whom the eldest was Vasumān and the youngest was known to fame as Rama. He, who was the extirpator of the race of the Haihayas, was said to be a partial incarnation of Vāsudeva. Thrice seven times he emptied the earth of Kshattriyas. He destroyed them, who burdened the earth, who were inimical to the Brāhmaṇas and unrighteous, dominated by *rajas* and *tamas* as they were; slaying every one of them, however small his offence (13-15).

The King asked, 'What was that offence against the mighty sage that the Kshattriyas who had not learnt self-control were guilty of, and that led to the repeated destruction, resulting in extinction, of their clans?' (16).

Sri Suka said : The ruler of the Haihayas was Arjuna, foremost of the Kshattriyas. He propitiated Datta (Dattātreyā), a partial incarnation of Narayana, by his worship, and obtained as a boon a thousand arms as well as irresistible might in the face of the foe. He got besides unabated vigour of all the faculties, wealth, beauty, intelligence, fame, strength, the powers of a master-yogi, and supremacy, with the possession of the eight supernatural attributes. And he moved all over the worlds, his movements unimpeded like that of air. Intoxicated with pride, wearing the Vaijayanti garland, he diverted himself in the waters of the Narmadā with women who were jewels of their sex, and blocked the waters with his arms. When Rāvaṇa, who vaunted himself on his valour, found his own camp flooded by the waters of the river that were thus made to flow up-stream, he could not tolerate such prowess in another. But, when he gave him cause for offence, Arjuna caught him playfully in the presence of the women and kept him in confinement like a monkey at Māhishmati, and then let him off (17-22).

He (Arjuna) once came by chance to the hermitage of Jamadagni, when he was hunting in the jungle. The sage, whose austerities were his wealth, entertained the King with all his troops, officials and mounts hospitably, with the help of the Cow of Plenty. Seeing that abundance, which put his own opulence in the shade, the valiant man thought little of the hospitality. He, as well as the other Haihayas, coveted the cow whose milk was used for the sage's fire-rites. In his arrogance he ordered his men to take away the cow, and they took her bellowing in grief, along with her calf, to Māhishmati. After the King had gone, Rama returned to the hermitage, and hearing of his wicked act, was in a rage like a serpent that is hit. Arming himself with the dread axe, the bow and quiver, and the shield, the formidable warrior set out in hot pursuit, as the lion pursues the leader of the elephant herd. Arjuna, when about to enter his city, saw the foremost of the Bhrgus coming valiantly in pursuit, armed with bow and arrow and his axe, clad in the skin of the antelope, his matted locks dazzling like the sun's rays. He sent against him seven-

teen *akshauhiṇīs* of terrible aspect, with the full complement of elephants, chariots, horse and infantry, armed with mace, sword, arrow, double-edged sword, *śataghni* and javelin. The glorious Rama destroyed them single-handed. Wherever he, wielding his axe with the strength and speed of the mind and the wind, was seen, there tumbled down chariot warriors, their arms, thighs and necks severed, their drivers and horses slain. When he saw his army laid low on the battle-field, miry with the flood of gore, their shields, flags, bows and bodies cut down by Rama's battle-axe and arrows, the ruler of the Haihayas advanced upon him in his wrath. Arjuna fitted simultaneously five hundred bows with arrows; whereupon Rama, foremost of all bowmen, cut down every one of the bows with arrows shot from his single bow. Then when he, pulling out trees and rocks on the battle-field, rushed upon the foe, Rama by main force lopped off his arms with the sharp-edged axe, as if they were so many serpents' hoods. Having cut down his arms, he severed his head, which was like a mountain-peak. On their father's death, his ten thousand sons fled in terror (23-35).

Rama, destroyer of the foe, led back to the hermitage, and handed over to his father the cow, which provided the milk for oblations, and which was in sore distress; and he told him and his brothers all that he had done. Jamadagni remonstrated with him: 'Rama, O Rama of the great arms, you have sinned in killing to no purpose the King, who is all-the-gods. We are Brahmanas, my child, who enjoy esteem because of our forbearance. It was by virtue of such forbearance that the god (Brahmā) attained his position of primacy among the creators. It is by his forbearance that the lustre of the Brahmana dazzles like that of the sun. The Paramount Lord Hari is pleased quickly with him who exercises patience. The killing of an anointed king is a greater sin than Brahmana-murder. Go and wash off your sins, my child, by bathing in sacred rivers, enshrining Achyuta in your heart' (36-41).

CHAPTER XVI

PARASURĀMA EXTIRPATES KSHATTRIYAS

Sri Suka said : Thus exhorted by his father, Rama agreed, and after spending a year on pilgrimage to sacred places, returned to the hermitage, O scion of the Kurus. Once Renukā, going to the Gangā, saw there the King of the Gandharvas, wearing the lotus garland and sporting with the Apsarases. As she gazed on him at play, she, who had gone to the river for water, forgot for a moment, under the impression Chitraratha made upon her, the hour when oblations were due to be made in the fire. Realizing that she was late and fearing the sage's curse, she returned and placed the pitcher of water before him, and stood with folded hands. The sage, who was in a rage, knowing how his wife had been disloyal in her mind, told his sons, 'Kill this sinful woman, my children', but they would not. Peremptorily ordered by his father, Rama slew his brothers along with his mother, knowing as he did the puissance that the sage had gained by concentration and by his austerities. The son of Satyavati, pleased with him, told him to name a boon ; and Rama prayed for the revival of those who had been slain and for total oblivion on their part of that act of slaying. They rose up forthwith hale and hearty as if just waking from sleep. It was because he knew the power of his father's austerities that Rama slew his own near and dear ones (1-8).

The sons of Arjuna, who had been put to rout by Rama's valour, had no peace of mind as they brooded on the slaying of their father, O King. Once, when Rama and his brothers were away in the forest, they came to the hermitage intent upon vengeance, having found their opportunity. Seeing the sage seated in the fire-chamber with his mind fixed on the illustrious Lord, they carried out their wicked resolve and slew him. Though begged hard by the helpless mother of Rama, those cruel and unworthy Kshattriyas cut off the sage's head by main force and carried it away. Renukā, the chaste woman, beat her breast, distraught with grief, and wailed aloud, crying, 'O Rama, Rama, my child, come quick!' Hearing from afar that distressful cry of 'O Rama,

alas !', he returned in all haste to the hermitage and found his father slain. Fainting under the overpowering force of agony, anger, indignation, distress and misery, he cried, 'Alas, O father, saintly and righteous soul, you have gone to heaven, abandoning us !' Lamenting thus, Rama entrusted his father's body to his brothers, and grasping his axe made up his mind to extirpate the Kshattriyas. Going to Māhishmati, whose splendour had been tarnished by Brahmana-murder, he made a mountain-heap of their heads in the heart of the city, O King. And with their blood he made a river, striking terror into the hearts of the foes of Brahmanas. And because of their murder of his father, he vowed vengeance against the evil-doing Kshattriyas, and the all-powerful warrior rid the earth of Kshattriyas again and again twenty-one times running, and at Syamanta-panchaka made nine lakes of blood. Recovering his father's head and joining it with the body in a sacrifice he offered, he propitiated with many offerings the Lord Who is all-the-gods and Who was his own Soul too. He gave away the East to the Hotā, the South to the Brahmā, the West to the Adhvaryu and the North to the Udgātā. He gave away the regions in the intermediate quarters to others, while to Kaśyapa he presented the central regions of the earth. He gifted Āryāvarta to the Upadrashtā and the rest to the members of the assembly. Then taking his lustral bath in the Sarasvati, whose tutelar deity is Brahmā, he, freed from all sins, shone with the splendour of the sun in the cloudless sky. Jamadagni, having got back his body, consisting wholly of consciousness, joined the circle of the (seven) sages as the seventh, honoured by Rama. The Lord Rama of the lotus eyes, son of Jamadagni, will be a propagator of the Veda (as one of the seven sages) in the forthcoming Manvantara, O King. Now he is living on the Mahendra mountain, at peace with himself, having relinquished violence, while the Siddhas and Gandharvas and Chāraṇas sing his exploits. The Paramount Lord Hari, Who is the soul of the universe, was thus incarnate among the Bhṛgus and repeatedly rid the earth of the Kings who grievously burdened it (9-27).

To Gādhi was born a son of incomparable lustre,

like fire that has been fanned to a blaze. By the power of his austerities he rose from the Kshattriya caste into which he was born and attained the Brāhmic splendour. Viśvāmitra had one hundred and one sons, O King ; he who was the middlemost of them was called Madhucchandasa, and they are known as the Madhucchandases. Adopting as his son Sunaśśepa, the scion of the Bhṛgu and son of Ajigarta, who was protected by the gods, he told his sons, 'Let Devarāta be treated as the eldest among you.' This Sunaśśepa, of the clan of the Bhṛgu, had been sold to Harischandra to be offered up as a sacrificial victim, but was freed from the bonds that held him, as the result of his praising the gods, Brahmā and others. Saved by the gods in this manner, in the sacrifice offered to them, that man of austerities, Sunaśśepa, became known to fame among the descendants of Gāndhī, as Devarāta. Since the elder brothers of Madhucchandasa did not agree to the according of seniority to Sunaśśepa, the sage cursed them saying, 'You wicked fellows shall be Mlecchas.' Thereupon Madhucchandasa, along with the fifty brothers, his juniors, told the sage, 'Whatever status you, revered sir, accord to us we shall accept.' And they all accepted Sunaśśepa as their senior and told him, who was the seer of Vedic *mantras*, 'We all come after you (as your younger brothers)'. Viśvāmitra told his sons, 'You, by showing me due respect, have made me the father of dutiful sons. So you shall all have sons. This Devarāta, O Kuśikas, is one of you, as my son. Follow him.' He had other sons too, Ashtaka, Hārīta, Jaya, Kratumān, and so on. Thus the Kauśika Gotra has many classes because of Viśvāmitra's sons. And it came to have a different Pravara in this manner (that is, by the accordance of seniority to Devarāta) (28-37).

CHAPTER XVII

OTHER DESCENDANTS OF PURŪRAVAS

Srī Suka said : Āyus, the son of Purūravasa, had the following sons, Nahusha, Kshattravṛddha, Rajī, Rambha, the valiant, and Anenas. And now, listen, great King, as I tell of Kshattravṛddha's family. Suhotra, Kshat-

travṛddha's son, had three sons, Kāśya, Kuśa and Gr̥t-samāda. The last had a son Sunaka, whose son was the sage Saunaka, foremost among the knowers of the R̥g-Veda. Kāśya's son was Kāśi; his son Rāshtra was the father of Dirghatamas. The latter's son was Dhanvantari, who propagated the science of medicine; he had a share in the sacrificial oblations. He was an *amsā* of Vāsudeva, and to remember him is to be relieved of suffering. His son was Ketumān; he had a son Bhīmaratha. The latter had a son Divodāsa, whose son was Dyumān, also known as Pratardana. He came to be known by various other names also, as Satrujit, Vatsa, R̥tadhwaja and Kuvalyāśva. From him were descended Aḷarka and others. For sixty-six thousand years Aḷarka, retaining the bloom of youth, ruled the earth; no other man has done it. Aḷarka's son was Sannati; he had a son Sunīta, whose son was Suketana. His son was Dharmaketu, to whom was born Satyaketu. The latter had a son Dhṛshtaketu. His son was the King Sukumāra. He had a son, Veetihotra, whose son was Bharga. His son Bhārgabhūmi became King after him. These were the Kings descended from Kāśi, of the line of Kshattravṛddha. Rambha had two sons Rabhasa and Gambhīra. Rabhasa's son was Akriya. Of his wife were born a family of Brahmanas. And now you shall hear of the descendants of Anenas. His son was Suddha, and he had a son Suchi. He had a son Trikakud, also known as Dharmasārathi. His son was Sāntaraya, who had realized the purpose of life, having gained enlightenment (and hence begot no children) (1-12).

Raji had five hundred sons of limitless prowess. Besought in this behalf by the gods, he slew the Daityas and restored heaven to Indra. Indra returned it to him, and being afraid of Prahlāda and other enemies, he clasped Raji's feet and put himself in his hands. When Raji died, his sons would not give back the sovereignty of heaven to Indra, though he asked for it, but themselves took the offerings of oblations to the gods. When the preceptor of the gods (Br̥haspati) was making offerings (in the fire used in black magic), Indra slew the sons of Raji, who had fallen from the path of righteousness, and not one of them was spared (12-16).

To Kuśa, grandson of Kshattravṛddha, was born Prati. Prati had a son Sanjaya. His son was Jaya. The latter's son was Kṛta, who had a son, the King Haryavana. He had a son Sahadeva, and he a son Aheena, whose son was Jayasena. His son was Sankṛti, whose son Jaya followed the Dharma of the Kshattriya and was a great chariot warrior. These conclude the line of Kings descended from Kshattravṛddha, and now you shall hear of the descendants of Yayāti, son of Nahusha (16-18).

CHAPTER XVIII THE STORY OF YAYĀTI

Srī Suka went on : Yati, Yayāti, Samyāti, Āyati, Viyati and Kṛti were the six sons of Nahusha, like the six senses of the *jīva* invested with a body. Yati did not want the kingdom given to him by his father, knowing as he did what it must lead to, since the man who enters on the career of a king does not realize the truth about the Self. When his father was dislodged from the position he had won (as ruler of heaven) by the Brahmanas, because he had attempted to coerce Indrāṇī, and became a boa-constrictor, Yayāti became King. He appointed his four younger brothers to govern the four quarters ; and having married the daughters of Kāvya and Vṛshaparvā, ruled over the earth (1-4).

The King asked : ' The blessed Kāvya was a Brahmarshi, whereas the son of Nahusha was an ordinary Kshattriya ; how did that marriage of a *pratiloma* character between a Kshattriya and a Brahmana woman come about ? ' (5).

Srī Suka answered : Once the youthful daughter of the King of the Dānavas, Sarmishtā, was strolling with a thousand companions, and Devayāni, the daughter of the King's Guru, in the garden on the outskirts of the city, full of trees in flower, and lotus pools and sandy beaches, the haunts of swarms of bees humming sweetly. The girls, with eyes lovely as the lotus, leaving their clothes on the banks, got into a pool and enjoyed themselves, splashing each other with water. Seeing the Lord Gīrīśa pass that way, seated on the bull with the goddess,

they got out of the lake abashed, and donned their clothes. Sarmishtā unwittingly took and wore the clothes of the Guru's daughter, thinking that they were hers. That made Devayāni angry, and she said, 'Ah! look at the outrageous behaviour of this slave in putting on my clothes, as if a bitch should walk away with the sacrificial oblations! We (Brahmanas) have created this world by our austerities; we are the very mouth of the Supreme Lord; we dwell on the Brahma, and propagate the auspicious (Vedic) way of life. The Rulers of the worlds and the great gods, why, the exalted Lord Himself, the Soul of the universe, Who sanctifies all, and Who is the Home of Lakshmi, make their reverence to us and extol us. And, among Brahmanas, we are the Bhṛguś, no less. My father is the preceptor of this girl's father. And yet the wicked creature has dared to put on my clothes, as if a Sūdra should learn the scriptures!' (6-14).

When the Guru's daughter thus abused her, Sarmishtā told her, biting her lips in anger and hissing like a snake at being thus browbeaten, 'Not knowing how you live, you prate endlessly, you beggar woman. Do you not wait at our door for crumbs like crows?' Having thus heaped harsh abuse in her anger on the preceptor's daughter, who was entitled to respect, she pushed her into a well, taking away her clothes (15-17).

When she had gone home, Yayāti, who was out hunting, came by chance to the well, being thirsty, and he saw her (Devayāni) inside it. Taking pity on her, he gave her, who was naked, his upper cloth to wear, and held out his hand and lifted her out of the well. The daughter of Uśanas told the intrepid warrior in a words full of love, 'You have taken my hand, O King, conqueror of the cities of the foe. Since you have grasped me by the hand, no one else shall take it (in marriage). This connection between us, O valiant one, has been brought about by God; it is not the work of man, since it has come about by (the accident of) my seeing you when I was caught up inside the well. No Brahmana will wed me, O you of the mighty arm, because of the curse laid on me by Kacha, the son of Bṛhaspati, which I had provoked by cursing him.'

Yayāti, though he did not like it (because it was against the Sāstra), agreed to what she said, seeing the hand of destiny in it, and also because he felt drawn towards her (18-23).

When the valiant King had gone, she went weeping to her father and reported to him all that Sarmishtā had said and done. The venerable sage Kāvya was unhappy to hear what she said. Condemning the profession of a priest, and extolling the way the pigeons live, (by gleaning stray ears of corn fallen in the field), he went away from the city, accompanied by his daughter. Vṛshaparvā, fearing that his enemies might persuade him to help them, overtook him on the road and prostrated himself before him, and touched his feet with his head, to pacify him. The blessed scion of the Bhrgus, whose anger was momentary, told his disciple, 'You should do what she wants, I cannot desert her here.' When he promised to do that, Devayāni spoke out her mind. 'She (Sarmishtā) shall follow me with her attendants, when I go to join whomsoever my father gives me to.' Seeing the danger her folk were in, and realizing how much might be gained by agreeing, she (Sarmishtā) served Devayāni like a servant along with her thousand women attendants. Uśanas, giving his daughter along with Sarmishtā, to the son of Nahusha, told him, 'You must never go to bed with Sarmishtā, O King' (24-30).

Once, seeing that the daughter of Uśanas was with child, Sarmishtā secretly solicited her friend's spouse in the right period. When the princess thus desired union with him with a view to progeny, he saw that it would be in accordance with Dharma to consent, and though he remembered Sukra's words, he acquiesced in the decree of fate. Devayāni gave birth to Yadu and Turvasu, while Sarmishtā, the daughter of Vṛshaparvā, gave birth to Druhyu, Anu and Pūru. The proud Devayāni, coming to know that the Asura woman had borne children to her husband, went away to her father's home in a towering rage. Her husband, who doted upon her, followed, trying to placate her, but neither entreaties nor endearments, such as pressing her feet, could appease her. The angry Sukra told him, 'Old

age that spoils good looks shall be your lot, you fool, who are addicted to women and a liar.' Yayāti begged him, saying, 'Loving your daughter as I do, O Brahman, I have not had all the satisfaction I desire.' He told him, 'You can exchange your old age for the youth of any one who is willing' (31-39).

Having thus come to an understanding regarding old age, he told his eldest son, Yadu, 'Yadu, my dear, accept my old age, brought upon me by your grandfather, and give me your youth. I have not found satiety in the enjoyment of pleasures, my child. Utilizing your youth, let me enjoy all pleasures for some years more.' Yadu told him, 'I do not want to take upon myself the old age that has come upon you in middle age. The man who does not know the pleasures of the senses can never know freedom from desires.' Turvasu, Druhyu, and Anu, similarly asked by their father, turned down his request, because they did not know what was true Dharma, and looked upon the perishable body as something everlasting, O scion of the Bharatas. He made the same request to his son Pūru, the youngest in years but superior to the others in virtue, telling him, 'You should not refuse my request, as your elder brothers have done, my child.' Pūru answered him, 'Who, O King, can requite his father, the author of his being, by whose grace he attains all felicity? He is the best of sons who anticipates his father's wish and does it; inferior to him is he who does as he is bidden; after him in worth comes he who does so half-heartedly; while he who does not do what his father wants, is no better than his father's dung.' Saying this Pūru gladly accepted his father's old age. And he, with this access of youth, heartily enjoyed the pleasures of life, O King. He, the lord of the seven island continents, protected his subjects with all the solicitude of a father, and enjoyed life to his heart's content, with his faculties in unimpaired vigour. Devayāni, too, whom he loved best, gave to her beloved spouse the highest satisfaction in secret concourse, utilizing all the resources of her mind, speech, body and possessions. Offering sacrifices with ample fees, he worshipped the Lord of the sacrifice, Hari, Who is all-the-gods, and is proclaimed by all the Vedas;

on Whom the universe is projected as is the bank of clouds on the sky, and is seen as multifold, or is not seen at all, like the objects that a man sees in a dream, but sees no longer when he falls asleep. Invoking Him, Who is Vāsudeva, the Dweller-in-the-Void, Who is Narayana, subtler than the subtlest, he worshipped the exalted Lord in his heart, without entertaining any desires. Though he thus enjoyed life with all the six senses for a thousand years, he, the universal monarch, was not even then satisfied with the pleasures that the outward-ranging senses brought him (38-51).

CHAPTER XIX

YAYĀTI RENOUNCES THE WORLD

Srī Suka said : That uxorious man thus immersed in pleasure came to realize his fall, and related the following apologue to his wife in his hour of disillusionment. 'Listen, O daughter of the Bhrgus, to the following story of one like me, leading a life of pleasure, which men of firm resolution who live the hermit's life deplore. A certain billy-goat, seeking his pleasure in the forest, saw a nanny-goat that had fallen into a well, reaping the fruit of her past *karma*. The amorous goat, pondering ways of getting her out, dug into the bank with the tip of his horn, to make an outlet for the water ; and the comely she-goat, then coming out of the well, desired to mate with him. And so did many other she-goats, who were drawn to him by desire, when they saw that she had chosen him who was stout and plump, with a luxuriant growth of beard and with plenty of virility and skill in making love. That goat, who fired the passions of so many of them, diverted himself with them, possessed by the evil spirit of sexual craving, and totally oblivious of his true interests. Seeing him sporting with another she-goat, who was very dear to him, the she-goat that had been got out of the well could not tolerate such goatish behaviour on his part. Abandoning the crafty creature, who paraded as a friend, who craved for physical love and whose attachment was momentary, as he was intent on gratifying his senses at all costs, she went to her owner. The desponding goat,

who was at the mercy of his mate, ran after her, bleating all the way, eager to appease her ; but he failed. The Brahmana, who was the owner of the she-goat, cut off the scrotum of the goat in anger. But later he, being skilled in doing such things, joined the severed organ again, so that it might be of use (to give the she-goat satisfaction). Having got back his testicles, the goat has spent many a long year in the company of the she-goat that had been got out of the well, O gentle dame, but is not even yet fully satisfied (1-11).

'In the same way, I, wretched creature that I am, and a slave to your love, O lovely one, do not know myself, being bewitched by your charms. The mind of the man who is hagridden by desire will not be satisfied with rice and barley, gold, cows and women. Never does passion die down by being indulged ; on the contrary it grows the more, like fire when oblations are made into it. When a man has come to look with an equal eye on all creatures and ceases to feel likes and dislikes in regard to any creature, he finds happiness in every direction. The man who desires true happiness should summarily discard that hankering for pleasure which men who are wanting in discrimination find it so hard to renounce, since it remains in unabated vigour, even while the man it plagues decays and wastes away. A man should not sit on the same seat with even his mother, sister or daughter ; the senses have overwhelming strength and drag even the wise man to his perdition. I have spent a full thousand years enjoying myself every moment ; and yet desire for the wonted pleasures never fails to come upon me at the appointed hour. Therefore, I shall get rid of this hankering, and fixing my mind on the Brahma, live with the beasts like one of them, freed from egoism and the sway of the pairs of opposites. The man who knows that what is seen or heard is unreal, and ceases to dwell on them in his thoughts or to enjoy them, being convinced that they lead to *samsāra* and the perishing of Self-knowledge, comes to realize the Self' (1-20).

Saying this to his wife, the son of Nahusha restored to Pūru his youth and took back from him his old age, having got rid of all desire. He put Druhyu in charge

of the South-east, Yadu, of the South, Turvasu, of the West, and Anu, of the North, crowned Pūru as emperor over all the peoples of the world, and placed his elder brothers under his control. He then retired to the forest. The senses, which had been employed for endless years in procuring the pleasures of life, he dismissed in a moment, as the bird that has grown wings leaves the nest. Living the forest life, discarding all attachments and realizing the Self, the famous Yayāti cast off the body constituted by the *guṇas* and attained the supreme and immaculate Brahma known as the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, the Goal which may be won only by the devotees of the Lord (21-25).

Devayāni took the apologue as intended to induce her to withdraw from the worldly life, though it seemed to jest at the fading away of love between man and woman. Coming to realize that the consorting of lovers was like the meeting and parting of strangers at a water-shed for wayfarers, since they were in the hands of God, and their friendship was the work of Māyā, the daughter of the Bhṛguś gave up all attachments, regarding them as no more substantial than dreams, fixed her mind on Krishna and discarded the body (26-28).

Sri Suka wound up, saying 'I make my prostrations to Thee, the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, the Creator of the worlds, the Dweller in the hearts of all beings, to Thee, the Brahma, Peace ineffable' (29).

CHAPTER XX

DUSHYANTA AND BHARATA

Sri Suka began again : Now I shall speak of the line of Pūru in which you were born, O scion of the Bharatas, that line into which were born great kings, who were the founders of dynasties, as well as Brahmanas who established Brahmana families. Janamejaya was the son of Pūru. His son was Prachinvān, whose son was Pravira. He had a son, Namasyu, and he a son Chārupada. His son was Sudyu. To him was born Bahugava. His son was Samyāti, who had a son Ahamyāti. The latter's son was Raudrāśva. He had ten sons, Rteyu, Kuksheyu, Sthandileyu, Kṛteyu, Jaleyu, Santateyu, Dharmeyu,

Satyeyu, Sruteyu, and Vaneyu, the last of them, all born to the Apsaras Ghṛtāchī, and they were all submissive to him as the organs of sense and action are to the vital breath that sustains the body. Rteyu had a son Ranti-bhāra, and he had three sons, O King, Sumati, Dhruva and Apratiratha. Kaṇva was Apratiratha's son. His son was Medhātithi, and from him were descended Praskaṇva and other Brahmanas. Sumati's son was Raibhya, whose son was Dushyanta (1-7).

Dushyanta, when out hunting, happened to find himself in Kaṇva's hermitage. Seeing there a woman who was like the Lord's enchantment, illuminating the whole place like the Goddess Ramā herself, he fell instantly in love with her. He, with whom were a few men-at-arms, spoke to her. Rejoicing to see her, all his fatigue fallen away instantly, he, who burned with love inwardly, spoke to her with a smile in pleasing words. 'Who are you, O lady of the lotus eyes? Whose daughter are you, charming one? And what do you do here in this unpeopled forest? It is clear to me that you are the daughter of a Kshattriya, O beautiful lady; the minds of the descendants of Pūru are not attracted to unrighteous courses' (8-12).

Sakuntalā told him, 'I am in fact Viśvāmitra's daughter, abandoned by Menakā in the forest. The blessed Kaṇva knows this. What shall we do for you, O valiant one? Take your seat, O lotus-eyed, and accept our hospitality. Dine here, we have wild rice, and you are welcome to stay' (12-14).

Dushyanta replied, 'Your conduct is what one would expect of one born in the family of the Kuśikas. For princesses make their own free choice of the man whom they will wed.' When Sakuntalā signified her consent, the King, who knew the right thing to do at the appropriate time and place, married her in accordance with Dharma, by the Gāndharva mode of marriage. The royal sage of limitless puissance deposited his seed in his queen. The next morning he went back to his city, and she in due course gave birth to a son. Kaṇva did for the young prince all the appropriate rites in the forest. Even as a child he used to catch lions by force, tie them up and play with them (15-18).

Taking with her the boy, whose valour was irresistible and who was born of a fraction of Hari, the excellent woman went to her husband's place. When the King refused to accept his blameless wife and son, a disembodied voice proclaimed in the hearing of all creatures, 'The mother is but the leathern vessel. The son belongs to the father. He is none other than the man to whom he was born. Accept your son, O Dushyanta, do not put a slight upon Sakuntalā. The son who can raise a family leads the father out of the abode of Yama, O King. You were the procreator of this child, Sakuntalā spoke the truth' (19-22).

When his father died, he became an emperor of great renown. The greatness of him who was born of a fraction of Hari is still sung on earth. On his right palm was the sign of the discus, and the marks of the lotus on the soles of his feet. Consecrated as emperor, with the Mahābhisheka, the powerful one worshipped the Lord with sacrifices. Making the son of Mamatā (Dirghatmas) his chief priest, he offered fifty-five horse sacrifices on the banks of the Gangā at different places along the course of the river, and seventy-eight horse sacrifices at places similarly situated on the banks of the Yamunā, and gave away wealth lavishly. The sacrificial fires were kindled by Bharata, the son of Dushyanta, on exceedingly sacred ground. A hundred thousand Brahmanas divided among themselves the enormous wealth of cows he gave them there, each getting thirteen thousand and eighty-four cows. Having tied up one hundred and thirty-three horses to the sacrificial post, astonishing all kings, the son of Dushyanta exceeded the glory of the gods and attained (Hari) the Mentor. He gave away fourteen hundred thousand black tuskers of the Mrga breed, with white tusks adorned with gold, in a certain rite called Mashnāra (23-28).

The mighty achievements of Bharata no other King in the past equalled, nor can any King in future hope to do so, any more than men can climb up to heaven, using their hands. In his expedition of world conquest he slew Kirātas, Hūnas, Yavanas, Andhras, Kankas, Khasas, Sakas and Mlecchas, as well as all kings who were the enemies of the Brahmanas. He recovered from

Rasātala and other nether regions the celestial women whom the strong Asuras had captured and taken there after having vanquished the gods, and wrested those regions from them. Earth and heaven yielded his subjects all that they desired. For twenty-seven thousand years his sovereign will prevailed in all directions. Then the emperor, looking upon a power and affluence which were famed among the Guardians of the worlds, a sovereignty that was impregnable, and his own physical and vital powers, as transient and illusory, relinquished it all (and attained *moksha*) (29-33).

He had three wives, daughters of the King of Vidarbha, whom he greatly loved. They slew all their children from the fear that he might discard them, because their husband had remarked that none of them was like him. When his family had thus failed, he worshipped the Maruts by offering the Marut-stoma, and they gave him Bharadwāja. He had been begot by force by Brhaspati on his brother's wife, when she was already with child. When he lay with her, and his brother's child in the womb protested, he persisted, and cursing the child, poured his virility into her. When Mamatā wanted to abandon Brhaspati's child (who had been born instantly) from the fear that her husband might discard her, the gods sang the following verse, which shows how he came to get his name (Bharadwāja). "“Silly woman, feed and bring up this child, born of two fathers” (said Brhaspati). “No, Brhaspati, you had better bring him up, who is the son of the two of us.” Thus disputing among themselves the father and mother left the child and went away, and so he has got the name Bharadwāja.’ Though the gods sought to persuade the mother to look after the child, she abandoned him, because he was of no use to her (being the child of infamy). But the Maruts brought him up and gave him in adoption to the family (of Bharata), which had been left without issue (36-39).

CHAPTER XXI

RANTIDEVA'S BOUNDLESS COMPASSION

Srī Suka said : Vitatha (as Bharadvāja had come to be known) had a son Manyu. He had five sons Br̥hat-kshattra, Jaya, Mahāvīrya, Nara and Garga. Nara had a son Sankṛti. The latter had two sons, Guru and Rantideva, O son of the Pāṇḍavas. Rantideva's fame is sung both here and in heaven. That man of fortitude depended on chance for his livelihood and gave away to others whatever he got, as and when it came, though he himself went hungry ; he owned nothing and suffered constantly with his family. He once spent forty-eight days without even a drink of water. The morning after, ghee, milk broth and wheaten cakes, as well as water became available by chance. When he, whose family had undergone intense suffering, and who was himself treampling all over with hunger and thirst, was preparing to break his fast, a Brahmana came to him as a guest. He received him cordially, and with all attention gave him a share of the food, since he saw Hari everywhere. The Brahmana ate it and went away. Then, when he (Rantideva), wishing to eat, had divided what remained with his family, a Sūdra came to him, and he gave him a share, remembering Hari. When the Sūdra had gone, another guest came, leading a number of dogs, and asked 'Give us food, O King, I and my dogs are starving.' And the great soul, in all friendliness, gave him what remained, showing him every courtesy, and made his bow to the dogs and their owner. When he was about to drink the water, which was all that remained, and which would be just sufficient for one man, a Pulkhasa came and begged him, saying, 'Give water to me, an unclean creature'. Hearing those moving words of his, which were so full of weariness and suffering, his compassionate heart was harrowed, and he spoke these nectar-sweet words. 'I do not ask of the Lord the supreme felicity attended with the eight supernatural attributes, or freedom from birth and death. I pray that I might, by dwelling in them, be able to take upon myself the sufferings of all creatures, so that they might be freed from misery. The fatigue due to hunger, thirst, weak-

ness, distress, languor, grief, despondency and delusion—all these I have shed as the result of giving water to a poor creature who clings to life.' Saying this, the heroic King, to whom compassion was innate, gave away the water to the Pulkhasa, though he was himself dying from thirst. To him the Overlords of the three worlds, who dispense the fruits of action to those who desire them, revealed themselves. It was they that had first appeared before him in other forms by the delusive power of Vishnu's Māyā. He who had shed all attachments and was free from all desire made his obeisance to them, and gave his mind wholly to Vāsudeva in pure devotion. As he, who desired naught else but the Lord, remained absorbed in Him, the Māyā constituted of the three *gunas* was dissipated like a dream. All who followed in Rantideva's footsteps became yogis devoted to Narayana by virtue of their close association with him (1-18).

Garga's son was Sini. His son was Gārgya; from him, a Kshatriya, a Brahmana clan came into existence. Duritakshaya was the son of Mahāvīrya; he had three sons, Trayyāruṇi, Kavi and Pushkarāruṇi. These scions of a Kshatriya clan became Brahmanas. Br̥hatkshattra had a son Hasti, who founded Hastināpuram. Hasti's sons were Ajamīdha, Dvimīdha and Purumīdha. Priyamēdha and other Brahmanas were descended from Ajamīdha. Another son of Ajamīdha was Br̥hadishu; his son was Br̥had-hanu. The latter's son was Br̥hatkāya, who had a son Jayadratha. His son was Viśada. He had a son Senajit. Senajit had four sons, Ruchirāśva, Dṛdhahanu, Kāśya and Vatsa. Ruchirāśva's son was Pāra, whose son was Pṛthuśena. Pāra had another son, Nipa, who begot a hundred sons. He (Nipa) had another son also, Brahmadatta, born to Kṛtvī, daughter of Suka. Brahmadatta was a yogi. He begot on his wife, the goddess of speech (Sarasvatī), a son, Vishvakṣena. Instructed by Jaigishavya, he wrote a work on Yoga. He had a son Udakṣvana, and he had a son Bhallāda. These were the descendants of Br̥hadishu (19-26).

Dvimīdha had a son Yavinara; his son was Kṛtimān. He had a son named Satyadhṛti. His son Dṛdhanemi was the father of Supārśva. The latter had a son Sumati,

who had a son Sannatimān. His son Kṛti learnt yoga from Hiranyanābha, as well as the collections of the *mantras*, and the Sāman chants pertaining to them, of the Prāchya-sāmas; he arranged and taught them. His son was Nīpa, whose son, Ugrāyudha, had a son Kshemya, whose son was Suvira. His son was Ripunjaya. He had a son named Bahuratha. Purumīdha had no issue. To Ajamīdha was born Nīla of his wife Nalinī. Nīla had a son Sānti. He had a son Susānti, whose son was Puruja. The latter had a son Arka. He had a son Bharmyāśva. The latter had five sons, Mudgala, Yavinara, Brhadishu, Kāmpilya and Sanjaya. Bharmyāśva told his sons, 'You sons of mine are competent to protect my five realms'; and so they came to be known as Panchālas. From Mudgala stemmed the Brahmana clan whose *gotra* was known as Maudgalya. To Mudgala, the son of Bharmyāśva, were born twins, a son Divodāsa, and a daughter Ahalyā; who bore a son, Sātānanda, to Gautama. His son was Satyadhṛti, skilled in the science of archery. He had a son Saradvān, who, on seeing Urvaśī, involuntarily shed his virility on a clump of reeds. Thus were begotten the excellent twins, on seeing whom Santanu, who was out hunting, was moved to pity. And he took them with him. They were Kṛpa, a boy, and Kṛpī, the girl who became the wife of Droṇa (27-36).

CHAPTER XXII

BHISHMA, THE KURUS AND PANDAVAS

Sṛi Suka said: Mitreyu was the son of Divodāsa. He had a son Chyavana, O King. He had a son Sudāsa, whose son was Sahadeva. His son was Somaka, whose son was Jantu. Somaka had a hundred sons, the youngest of whom was Prshata. The latter's son was Drupada, who was the father of Draupadī and of Dhṛshtadyumna and others. Dhṛshtadyumna's son was Dhṛshtaketu. These were the rulers of the Panchāla region, descended from Bharmyāśva (1-3).

Another son of Ajamīdha, Rksha, had a son Samvараṇa. To him was born of Tapatī, the daughter of the sun-god, Kuru, the King of Kurukshetra. Parīkshit,

Sudhanu, Jahnu and Nishadhāśva were the sons of Kuru. To Sudhanu was born Suhotra, whose son was Chyavana. He had a son Kṛtī. To him was born Uparichara Vasu. To the latter were born Brhadratha and others. Of them, Kuśāmba, Matsya, Pratyagra, and others were the rulers of Chēdi. Brhadratha's son was Kuśāgra, whose son was Rshabha. His son was Satyahita. He had a son, Pushpavān, whose son was Jahu (4-7).

Brhadratha had another wife, who gave birth to two halves of a human foetus. When they were thrown away by the mother, Jarā joined them together in play, crying, 'Live, live,' and thus was born Jarāsandha, the son of Brhadratha. Jarāsandha's son was Sahadeva, and he had a son Somāpi, whose son was Srutaśravas. Parīkshit had no issue. Jahnu had a son Suratha. His son was Vidūratha, whose son was Sārvabhauma. He had a son Jayasena, whose son was Rādhika. He had a son Ayuta. His son was Krodhana. He had a son Devātithi, to whom was born Rshya. His son was Dilipa, to whom was born Pratīpa (7-11).

Pratīpa had three sons Devāpi, Santanu and Bāhlika. Devāpi renounced his father's kingdom and retired to the forest, and Santanu, who in a former life had been known as Mahābhisha, became King. Any old man whom he touched became young, and attained the peace that goes with good health. It was because of this transforming touch of his hands that he came to be known as Santanu. When the all-powerful god (Indra) did not let rain fall for twelve years in succession in his kingdom, Santanu enquired the reason of Brahmanas, who told him, 'You are a *parivettā*, having become the ruler before your elder brother. Hand over the kingdom forthwith to him, for the prosperity of the city and the realm.' Thus advised by the Brahmanas, he sought to persuade his elder brother to accept the kingdom. But he, having fallen away from the Vedic way of life by the teaching of the Brahmanas whom Santanu's minister had secretly sent to lead him astray, spoke criticising and condemning the Vedas. Thereupon the god sent down showers. Devāpi, practising yoga, has settled down in Kalāpagrāma. When the Lunar Race becomes extinct

in Kali, he will re-establish it at the beginning of the Kṛta-yuga (12-18).

To Bāhlika was born Somadatta. The latter had three sons, Bhūri, Bhūriśravas and Sala. To Santanu was born of Gangā (the river-goddess), Bhishma, the self-controlled, who was foremost among those who were well-versed in all Dharmas, a great devotee of the Lord and a seer, as well as being the commander of the hosts of valiant fighters, who won the commendation of even Rāma (Paraśurāma) in battle. To Santanu was born of a fisherman's daughter, a son Chitrāngada, and his younger brother Vichitravīrya. Chitrāngada was slain by his namesake (the Gandharva Chitrāngada) in battle. Of her (Satyavatī, before she married Santanu), had been born to Parāśara the sage Krishna (Dvaipāyana), who was a digit of the Lord Himself, and to whom the Vedas owe their preservation. It was from him that I, born of his loins, learnt this Purāṇa. Leaving out his disciples Paila and others, the blessed sage Bādarāyana imparted this supremely secret Purāṇa to me, his son, as I had freed myself from loves and hates and achieved tranquillity (18-23).

Vichitravīrya married two daughters of the King of Kāśi, Ambikā and Ambālikā, who had been carried off by force (by Bhishma) from the joust held for a bride's choice. Head over ears in love with them, he died of an affection of the lungs. Bidden by his mother, Bādarāyana begot, on the wives of his brother, who had died childless, Dhṛtarāshtra, Pāndu and Vidura. To Dhṛtarāshtra were born a hundred sons of Gandhārī, O King, of whom Duryodhana was the eldest, and also a daughter, Duśśalā. As Pāndu could not have sexual intercourse with his wife because of a curse, there were born three great chariot-warriors, Yudhishtira and his two brothers, to Kuntī, through the grace of the gods, Dharma, Vāyu and Indra; while to Mādrī were born Nakula and Sahadeva as the fractions of the Aśvin twins. To the five brothers were born five sons of Draupadī, who were your uncles, these being Prativindya, born to Yudhishtira, Srutasena to Vṛkodara, Srutakīrti to Arjuna, Satānika to Nakula, and Srutakarmā to Sahadeva, O King. Other sons, born

to them of other wives, were Devaka, to Yudhishtira of Pauravī, and Ghatotkacha, to Bhīmasena of Hidimbī, while Bhīma had another son, Sarvagata, born of Kālī (another wife of his). To Sahadeva Vijayā, the daughter of Parvata, bore a son Suhotra. Nakula had a son Niramitra of Kareṇumatī. Likewise Arjuna had a son Irāvān of Ulūpi, and Babhruvāhana, of the daughter of the King of Manipura, who adopted him as his own son (*putrikāputra*). Your father Abhimanyu was born to Arjuna of Subhadra; he was a warrior who defeated all super-charioteers, and to him you were born of Uttarā. When the line of the Kuru Kings was virtually extinct, and you too had been burnt by the Brahmāstra of the son of Droṇa, you were saved by the grace and might of Krishna (23-34).

You, my child, have these sons of yours, Janamejaya, Srutasena, Bhīmasena and the valiant Ugrasena. Janamejaya, coming to learn that Takshaka, had caused your death will, in his wrath, offer up serpents as sacrifice in the fire at the snake-sacrifice that he will perform. Appointing Tura, the son of Kavasha, as his Chief Priest, he will worship the Lord with horse-sacrifices, after conquering the entire earth, and thus become famous; he will also offer other sacrifices. His son Satānika will learn the three Vedas and the knowledge of rituals from Yājñavalkya, the knowledge of weapons (from Kṛpa) and the supreme knowledge, that of the Self, from Saunaka. He will have a son Sahasrānika, and he a son Asvamedhaja, whose son Aseemakrishna will have a son Nemichakra. When Gajāhvaya is swamped by the river, he will live comfortably at Kausāmbī. He will have a son Chitraratha, and he a son Kaviratha. The latter will have a son Vrshtimān. His son, the King Sushena, will have a son Śunitha, whose son Nṛchakshus will have a son Sukhinaḥ. He will have a son, Pāriplava, whose son Sunaya will have a son, Medhāvī. His son Nṛpanjaya will have a son, Dūrva, who will have a son, Timi. Timi's son, Bṛhadratha will have a son, Sudāsa, who will have a son, Satānika. The latter will have a son, Durdamana, whose son will be Bahinara. The latter's son Dandapāni will have a son Nimi, whose son Kshemaka will become King. I have now described

the race of Brahmanas and Kshatriyas who were honoured by the celestial sages (35-44).

With King Kshemaka this race will become extinct in Kali. Now I shall tell you of the future Kings of Magadha. To Sahadeva (the son of Jarāsandha) will be born Mārjāri, whose son Srutaśravas will have a son, Ayutāyus. He will have a son, Niramitra, whose son Sunakshatra will have a son, Brhatsena, and he a son, Karmajit. He will have a son, Srutanjaya, to whom will be born a son, the Brahmana named Suchi. He will have a son, Kshema (a Kshatriya), whose son Suvrata will have a son, Dharmasūtra. To him will be born Sama. He will have a son, Dyumatsena, whose son Sumati will have a son, Subala. His son Sunitha will have a son, Satyajit. He will have a son, Viśvajit, and he a son, Ripunjaya. The Kings descended from Brhad-ratha will rule for a thousand years (45-49).

CHAPTER XXIII

THE DESCENDANTS OF YAYATI'S SONS

Sri Suka said: Anu had three sons, Sabhānara, Chakshus and Paroksha. To Sabhānara was born Kālānara. His son was Sṛnjaya. He had a son, Janāmejaya, whose son Mahāsīla had a son, Mahāmanas. The latter had two sons, Uśīnara and Titikshu. Uśīnara had four sons, Sibi, Vana, Sami and Daksha. Sibi had four sons, Vṛshādarbhā, Suveera, Madra and Kekaya. Titikshu had a son, Ruśadratha. The latter's son was Hema, whose son Sutapas was the father of Bali. To Dirghatamas were born of the wife of Bali, the Kings Anga, Vānga, Kalinga, Suhma, Pundra and Andhra, who gave their names to the six realms which they established in the eastern part of Bhāratavarsha (1-6).

Khanapāna was born to Anga, and to him was born Diviratha. His son was Dharmaratha, and he had a son, Chitraratha, who was without issue. He was known to fame as Romapāda. To him his friend Daśaratha gave his daughter Sāntā, whom Rṣyaśiṅga married. When the God Indra withheld rain, courtesans had brought him, who was born of a deer, employing dance, music and song as well as their arts of coquetry, em-

braces, presents, and so on. He conducted a sacrifice to Indra on behalf of the King, who had no children. The King thus got a son. And it was by the performance of a similar sacrifice by the sage that Daśaratha, too, who was childless, came to have sons (6-10).

Romapāda's son was Chaturanga, and he had three sons, Br̥hadratha, Br̥hatkarmā and Br̥hadbhānu. Br̥hadratha had a son, Br̥hanmanas, whose son was Jayadratha. He had a son, Vijaya, of Sambhūti; and Vijaya had a son, Dhṛti. The latter had a son, Dhṛtavrata, whose son, Satkarmā, had a son, Adhiratha. It was he who, while playing on the bank of the Gangā, found a child in a box, whom Kuntī had borne while yet an unmarried maid and so discarded. Being without issue, Adhiratha adopted the child. He, Karna, who became a King, had a son, Vṛshasena (10-14).

Druhyu (the son of Yayāti) had a son, Babhru, whose son was Gāndhāra. He had a son, Dharma, whose son was Dhṛta. His son was Durmanas, whose son Prachetas had a hundred sons. They, going north, became the rulers of the Mlecchas. Turvasu had a son, Vahni, whose son was Bharga, and he had a son, Bhānumān. His son was Tribhānu, whose son was the generous Karandhama. His son Maṇvata had no children, and he adopted the scion of the Pūrus, Dushyanta. But he, being desirous of ruling the kingdom, reverted to his ancestral line (14-18).

And now, great King, I shall describe the line of Yadu, Yayāti's eldest son, which is of exceeding sanctity and capable of abolishing all sins. By listening to the account of Yadu's line a man is freed from all sins, since the exalted Lord, the Paramātmān, was incarnate in it as man. Yadu had four sons, Sahasrajit, Kroshtā, Nala and Ripu. To the first was born Satajit. His sons were Mahāhaya, Vṛṇuhaya and Haihaya. To the last was born Dharma, whose son Netra was the father of Kuntī. Kuntī's son was Sohanji, whose son Mahishmān was the father of Bhadrāsena. Bhadrāsena had two sons, Durmada and Dhanaka. To the latter was born Kṛtavīrya. His other sons were Kṛtāgnī, Kṛtavarṇmā and Kṛtaujaś. Kṛtavīrya's son Arjuna became the overlord of the seven island continents, having won

the supreme fruits of yoga by pupilage under Dattātreyā, who was an *amśa* of the Lord. No other King will ever attain anything like equality with Kārtavīrya in respect of sacrifices, gifts, austerities, yoga, knowledge, prowess, or victories. For eighty-five thousand years he, with undiminished strength, enjoyed the exhaustless objects of the six senses, and those who lost their possessions recovered them by merely remembering him (19-26).

Of his thousand sons, only five survived after the battle (against Paraśurāma). These were Jayadhwaja, Sūrasena, Vṛshabha, Madhu and Ūrjita. Jayadhwaja had a son, Tālajangha; he had a hundred sons. The Kshattriya clan of Tālajanghas was extirpated by Sagara, who was strengthened by the puissance of Aurva. The eldest of Tālajangha's sons was Veetihotra. His son was Madhu, who had a hundred sons, the eldest of whom was Vṛshṇi. Because of them (Yadu, Madhu and Vṛshṇi), this clan became known as Mādhavas, Vṛshṇis, and Yādavas, O King (27-30).

Yadu's son Kroshtā had a son, Vṛjinavān, His son was Svāhi, whose son was Ruśeku. He had a son, Chitraratha, whose son was Saśabindu, the great yogi, whose enjoyments were equal to his unparalled greatness. He was an emperor who possessed the fourteen great gems, and never knew defeat. That man of supreme renown had ten thousand wives, and he begot on them one hundred crores of children. Of them six were the most important, Pṛthuśravas and others. Pṛthuśravas's son was Dharma, whose son, Uśanas, offered a hundred horse-sacrifices. His son was Ruchaka, and he had five sons; let me tell you of them. They were named Purujit, Rukma, Rukmeshu, Pṛthu and Jyāmagha. The latter's wife, Saibyā, was issueless. From fear of his wife, he did not take to himself another wife. He carried off the daughter of his foe, to be his (unwedded) wife. Seeing her sitting in his chariot, Saibyā indignantly questioned her husband, 'Who is this whom you have put in my place in the chariot, you crafty creature?' 'She is your daughter-in-law,' he said; to which she replied smiling, 'I am a barren woman and have no co-wife either. How, then, can she be my daughter-in-law?' 'He whom you will give birth to, O queen, will

be her husband.' The Viśvedevas and the manes endorsed what he said. Saibyā became pregnant in due course and gave birth to a handsome boy, known as Vidarbha. He married the chaste woman, who became Saibyā's daughter-in-law (31-39).

CHAPTER XXIV

BIRTH OF BALARĀMA AND SRI KRISHNA

Srī Suka said: Of her Vidharbha had two sons, Kuśa and Kratha, and then a third son, Romapāda, the delight of the Vidarbha family. He had a son, Babhru, and to him was born Kṛti. His son Uśika was the father of Chedi, to whom were born Chaidya (Damaghosha) and others, O King. Kratha had a son, Kunti, whose son was Dhṛishti. He had a son, Nirvṛti. The latter had a son named Dasārha, whose son was Vyoma. The latter had a son, Jimūta, whose son Vikṛti had a son, Bhīmaratha. To him was born Navaratha, and he had a son, Daśaratha. His son was Karambhi, whose son Sakuni had a son, Devarāta. The latter had a son, Devakshattra, and he a son, Madhu. Madhu's son Kuruvaśa had a son, Anu, whose son was Pūruhotra. His son was Ayu, who had a son, Sātvata. Bhajamāna, Bhaji, Divya, Vṛshṇi, Devāvr̥dha, Andhaka and Mahābhoja were the seven sons of Sātvata, noble sir. Bhajamāna had three sons, Nimlochi, Kinkīṇa and Dhṛshti, of one wife, and of another wife he had three sons, Satājit, Sahasrājit and Ayutājit, my lord. Babhru was the son of Devāvr̥dha. They (father and son) are celebrated in the following verses. 'What we have heard from afar, the same we see for ourselves when close at hand. Babhru is the foremost among men, and Devāvr̥dha is equal to the gods. By virtue of the puissance of Babhru and Devāvr̥dha, fourteen thousand and sixty-five men attained immortality.' Mahābhoja was a righteous soul. The Bhojas were his descendants (1-11).

Vṛshṇi's sons were Sumitra and Yudhājit, O scorcher of the foe. The latter had two sons, Sini, and Anamitra. Anamitra had a son, Nimna, who had two sons, Satrājit and Prasena. Anamitra's other son Sini had a son, Satyaka, whose son was Yuyudhāna. He had a son

Jaya, whose son was Kūṇi. He had a son Yugandhara. Anamitra had (as stated above) another son, Vṛṣṇi. He had two sons, Svaphalka and Chitraratha. The former had twelve famous sons of Gāndhīnī, after Akrūra, the eldest. These were named Āsanga, Sārameya, Mrdura, Mrduvit, Giri, Dharmavṛddha, Sukarmā, Kṣhetrokeksha, Arimardana, Satrugṇa, Gandhamādhya and Pratibāhu. They had a sister Suchīrā. Akrūra had two sons, Devavān and Upadeva. Chitraratha had many sons, Prthu, Vidūratha and other scions of the Vṛṣṇi family. Kukura, Bhajamāna, Suchi and Kambalabarhis were the sons of Andhaka. Kukura had a son, Vahni, whose son was Vilomā. The latter had a son, Kapotaromā, whose son Anu had Tumburu for his companion. Anu's son was Andhaka, whose son was Dundubhi. He had a son, Aridyota, whose son Punarvasu was the father of Āhuka, and a daughter, Āhukī. Āhuka had two sons, Devaka and Ugrasena. Devaka had four sons, Devavān, Upadeva, Sudeva and Devavardhana. They had seven sisters, O King, Dhṛṭadevā, Sāntidevā, Upadevā, Sṛidevā, Devarakṣitā, Sahadevā and Devakī. Vasudeva married them. Kamsa, Sunāmā, Nyagrodha, Kanka, Sanku, Suhū, Rāshtrapāla, Sṛṣṭi and Tushtimān were the sons of Ugrasena. Kamsā, Kamsavati, Kankā, Sūrabhū and Rāshtrapālikā, the daughters of Ugrasena, married Vasudeva's younger brothers (12-25).

Vidūratha's son was Sūra; his son was Bhajamāna. His son was Sini, whose son Svayambhoja was the father of Hṛdika. The latter had three sons, Devabāhu, Sata-dhanu and Kṛtavarmā. Devamīdhya had a son, Sūra, who married Mārīshā. Of her he had ten flawless sons, Vasudeva, Devabhāga, Devaśravas, Ānaka, Sṛṇjaya, Syāmaka, Kanka, Samika, Vatsaka, and Vṛka. Vasudeva, who was the vehicle of the Lord Hari's descent on earth, is spoken of as Ānakadundubhi, since at his birth celestial kettle-drums and war drums sounded. They had five sisters, Prtha, Srutadevā, Srutakīrti, Śrutaśravas, and Rājādhidevi. Prtha's father gave his daughter to his friend Kuntī, who was childless. She, by propitiating Durvāsas, obtained from him knowledge of the secret lore Devahūti (literally, the spell by which

the gods may be summoned). Wishing to test its efficacy, she summoned the immaculate sun-god. When he appeared instantly, she was astonished, and she told him, 'I employed the spell to make sure that it worked. Forgive me, O god, and go'. He replied, 'Sight of me can never go for nothing. I shall beget a child of you, O shining one. I shall see to it that your virginity is not violated, lovely lady'. Saying this, the sun-god deposited his seed in her and returned to heaven. That very moment she gave birth to a boy, who shone like a second sun. Afraid of the world's censure she, in great distress of mind, set him adrift in the river. Your great-grandfather Pāndu of the indefeasible valour married her (26-36).

Srutadevā was married by Vṛddhāśarmā, the King of Karūsha. Of her was born Dantavakra, who, as a son of Diti, had been cursed by the sages. Dhṛṣṭaketu, the King of the Kekayas, married Srutakīrti; she brought forth five sons, Santardana and others, Kekaya princes. Jayasena begot the two Kings of Avantī (Vindā and Anuvindā) of Rājādhīdevī. The King of Chedi, Damaghosha, married Srutaśravā. Her son was Sīsupala, the story of whose birth has been already related. Devabhāga had two sons, Chitraketu and Brhadbala, of his wife Kamsā. To Devaśravas were born Suvira and Ishumān of Kamsāvati. To Ānaka were born Satyajit and Purujit of Kankā. Śrījaya begot on Rāshtrapālī, Vṛsha, Durmarshana and others. To Syāmaka were born of Sūrabhūmi, Harikeśa and Hirnyāksha. Vatsaka begot Vṛka and others on the Apsaras Mīśrakesī. To Vṛka were born of Durvarkshi, Taksha, Pushkara, Sala and others. Sudaminī bore to Śamika, Sumitrā, Arjunapāla and others. Kanka had of Karmikā two sons Rādhāmā and Jaya (37-49).

Pauravī, Rohinī, Bhadrā, Madirā, Lochanā, Ilā, Devakī and others were the wives of Ānakadundubhi (Vasudeva). To him were born of Rohinī, Bala, Gada, Sāraṇa, Durmada, Vipula, Dhruva and Kṛta. Pauravī had twelve sons (born to Vasudeva), Bhūta, Subhadra, Bhadravāha, Durmada, Bhadra and others. Nanda, Upananda, Kṛtaka, Sūra and others were the sons of Madirā. Kausalyā (Bhadrā) gave birth to an only son,

Keśi, the delight of his race. Of Rochanā were born Hasta, Hemāngada and others. Vasudeva's sons born of Ilā were Uruvalka and other prominent scions of the Yadus. He had only one son, Viprshtha, of Dhṛtadevā. Sāntidevā's sons were Srama, Pratiśruta and others, O King. Kalpavarsha and other Kings were the ten sons of Upadevā. Sridevā had six sons, Vasu, Hamsa, Suvamśa and the rest. Devarakshitā had nine sons, Gada and so on, by Vasudeva. Vasudeva had eight sons of Sahadevā, Puru, Viśruta and the rest, even as the God Dharma begot the eight Vasus (50-53).

The high-minded Vasudeva begot on Devakī eight sons, Kīrtimān, Sushena, Bhadrasena, Rju, Sammar-dhana, Bhadra and Sankarshana, the King of the serpents, the eighth being none other than the Supreme Lord Hari Himself, incarnate of His free will. And there was born a daughter too, the fortunate Subhadra, your grandmother, O King (53-55).

Whenever in this world Dharma decays and sin waxes strong, the exalted and supreme Lord Hari manifests Himself. Except His delight in the play of His own Māyā, there is no reason either for His taking birth or for His doing deeds, O King, since He is the Supreme Controller, Who is totally without attachment, Who pervades all that is, and is yet the Witness, unconcerned and aloof. The work He does, employing His Māyā, is really by way of bestowing His grace on the *jīva*, contriving as it does the birth, preservation and destruction of every creature, and also by putting a stop to all this and releasing the *jīva* from the transmigratory travail. The exalted Lord Madhusūdana exerted Himself to rid the earth of its burden, when the Asuras in the guise of Kings, who commanded many *akshauhini*s, overran the earth; and along with Sankarshana He did deeds which could hardly be even conceived of by the highest gods. To be a blessing to those who would be born on earth in the Kali Age, He spread far and wide His thrice-holy fame, to hear of which is to be freed from grief, sorrow and ignorance. The man who, for the nonce, drinks in with his ear (as with the cupped hands), from that sacred reservoir of what is nectar for the ears of good men, the

story of His fame, instantly shakes himself free from the residual impressions of *karma*. With that blessed form in which every feature was lovely, and with His exploits, which were extolled by the Bhojas, Vṛshṇis, Andhakas, Madhus, Sūrasenas, Dāsārhakas, Kurus, Sṛñjayas and Pāndus, with His loving smile and look and His gracious words and playful pastimes, He rejoiced the hearts of men. Men and women drank in with their eyes the beauty of His face, which afforded them endless joy, with the *makara*-shaped ear-pendants adorning the shapely ears, the shining cheeks, and the merry smile playing on it. They could never have enough of it, and they were cross with Nimi (for making the eyelids wink). Born in His father's house, the Supreme Lord went to Vraja, where He multiplied the felicity of its inhabitants. Having destroyed His foes, He married many wives and begot hundreds of sons on them, and He worshipped His own Self by the offering of many sacrifices, with a view to propagating among men the Vedic way of life He Himself had prescribed. Dissipating the grievous burden of the earth through the internecine strife that broke out among the Kurus, and annihilating by a mere glance the armies of Kings massed on the field of battle, He proclaimed that it was Arjuna's victory. Then, having enlightened Uddhava on the Supreme Reality, He returned to His own Abode (56-67).

(Here ends the *Ninth Book of Sṛmad-Bhāgavatam*).

SRIMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

BOOK X (Part I)

CHAPTER I

DEVAKĪ'S MARRIAGE

The King said : ' You, O best of sages, have chronicled the dynasties of the Moon and the Sun and the marvellous doings of the kings of both races and, with particular fullness, of those born in the family of the virtuous Yadu. Be pleased to describe the heroic exploits of Vishnu, incarnate in that House with an *amsā* of Himself. Tell us at length of all that the exalted Lord, Who creates all beings and Who is the Soul of the universe, did when He appeared in the line of Yadu. Who but a butcher of beasts could ever tire of hearing of the auspicious qualities of the Most Glorious, which are lauded to the skies by those that are free from all desire, and are a medicine for the malady of birth and death, and a delight to the ear and the mind alike ? Speak of the mighty deeds of Him, with Whom for a raft my grandsires crossed the ocean of the embattled hosts of the Kauravas, formidable with those leviathans, the god-vanquishing Devavrata (Bhīshma) and other super-charioteers, as though it were but a calf's-hoof puddle ; of Him Who, discus in hand, entered the womb of my mother, who sought refuge with Him, and protected this, my body, sole seed of the Kuru and Pāṇḍava races, ravaged by the celestial weapon of the son of Droṇa ; tell us, O wise one, of Him, the seeming mortal, Who as the Lord dwelling in all hearts bestows immortality, and as time, which takes many forms, deals out death in this world (1-7).

' You spoke of Rāma as the son of Rohiṇī, and then described Him as Sankarshana (incarnate as the son of Devakī). How could He have been in Devakī's womb, unless it were in a different birth ? Why did the Lord Mukunda go away from His father's home to Vraja ?

Where did the Master of the Sātvatas make His abode with His kin? And what did Keśava do when He lived in Vraja and in the City of Madhu? How was it that He Himself killed Kamsa, who was His mother's brother, and thus did not deserve to die at His hands? Born into the world of men, how long did He live with the Vṛshnis in the City of Yadu, and how many spouses did the All-powerful have? Tell me, I am so eager to hear all this, and what else there might be to tell of Krishna's doings, omniscient sage. Intolerable though this hunger is—and I have given up taking even water—it does not plague me while I am drinking in the nectar of Hari's story as it drops from your lotus lips' (8-13).

The Sūta said: On hearing those pertinent questions, O son of the Bhṛgu, the blessed one, the son of Bādarāyaṇa, foremost of the devotees of the Lord, commended Vishnurāta's zeal and began the tale of Krishna, which removes the stain of Kali (14).

Srī Suka said: Excellent is your resolution, O best of royal sages, which has brought you unflagging delight in the story of Vāsudeva. Any question about Vāsudeva's doings purifies three parties, the man who answers the question, the man who asks it, and those who listen to them—even as does the water that laves His feet. The earth, oppressed by the weight of numberless hordes that served the Asuras who bore the semblance of arrogant kings, sought refuge with Brahmā. Taking the form of a cow, she appeared before the great god, in a state of extreme exhaustion, her face bathed in tears as she wept and cried piteously and told her tale of woe. Reflecting on what she said, Brahmā took her and the other gods along with him, and went, accompanied by the Three-eyed, to the shore of the Milky Ocean. Arrived there, he worshipped with a collected mind, chanting the *Purusha-Sūkta*, the Lord of the universe, the God of gods, the Giver of all gifts and Dispeller of all sorrows. Having heard in the state of deep meditation a voice in the Void¹, Brahmā told the gods, 'Listen, I will tell you what the Lord said; then you must go and do as you are told without loss of time. The Supreme had taken note of the travail of the earth even

¹ This follows N. Others render 'gagane' as 'in the sky'.

before we spoke. You shall all be born with fractions of yourselves among the Yadus, against the coming of the Lord of Lords to dwell on earth and dissipate her burden by His power, time. The exalted Lord, the Supreme Purusha, will Himself be incarnate in the House of Vasudeva. Let the celestial nymphs be born on earth for His pleasure. That *amśa* of Vāsudeva, the divine Ananta of the thousand heads, the Self-luminous, will be born (as His elder brother), eager to do Hari's wish. The great goddess, Vishnu's Māyā, 'by whose power the world lies tranced, will appear on earth with a part of Her essence, as bidden by the Lord, to fulfil His purposes' (15-25).

Srī Suka went on: Having thus directed the company of the gods and comforted the earth with his words, the Lord of the Patriarchs departed for his splendid home. In days gone by, Sūrasena, Lord of the Yadus, living in Mathurā, ruled over the kingdoms of Mathurā and Sūrasena. From then onwards that Mathurā, where the exalted Lord Hari is ever present, has been the capital of all Yādava rulers. In that city, as it once befell, Vasudeva, the son of Sūra, having just married, got into a chariot with his new bride Devaki to journey homeward. Ugrasena's son Kamsa took the reins to please his sister¹, and a hundred chariots adorned with gold accompanied them. At the time of departing, Devaki, who loved his daughter, gave her as dowry four hundred elephants with gold collars, fifteen thousand horses, eighteen hundred chariots and two hundred maids, all in the bloom of youth, and well-adorned. As they started, conch-shell and drum, *mṛdanga* and kettle-drum sounded in concert auspiciously for the the bride and bridegroom (26-33).

On the way, a voice was heard addressing Kamsa, who had the reins in his hands; it said, 'Fool, the eighth child of her whom you carry will be your death.' Thus told, the wicked rascal, a disgrace to the Bhojas, seized his sister by the hair, sword in hand, to kill her. Seeking to conciliate the cruel and shameless fellow, who was intent on that horrible deed, the noble Vasudeva said: 'You have qualities that evoke the adnira-

¹ Actually cousin, being his father's brother's daughter.

tion of valiant men, and have brought fame to the Bhojas. How could such as you slay a woman, and she your sister, and that too on the auspicious occasion of her wedding? Death, O valiant one, is born with the body when men are born; whether it come this minute or a hundred years hence, come it must for all creatures. When the body is on the threshold of death, the *jīva*, following his *karma* perforce, secures another body and leaves the old one. Just as the walker plants one foot on the ground before he moves the other, or the caterpillar on the grass, so does the *jīva*, traversing the way marked out for him by his *karma*. It is like what happens to the man who, because his mind has been constantly dwelling on a body that he had seen or heard of, which greatly attracted him, sees in a dream or intense reverie what looks like that body, and at once identifies himself with it, forgetting his own body. When at the point of death the mind, whose nature is change, runs after that one body, among the many which are produced by Māyā from the five elements, towards which it is impelled by the fructifying *karma* of the *jīva*, and cleaves to it, the *jīva* goes into that body in a new birth, along with the mind with which he has identified himself. Just as the reflections of the luminaries in water, oil or other substance, follow the motions of the wind, so the *jīva*, having entered the bodies created by his own nescience, prompted by desire, becomes engrossed in them. Such being the nature of the *jīva*, no man who desires his own good here and hereafter should harm anyone. And without a doubt he who harms another must expect to suffer at his hands. This, your younger sister, is a mere child: she is helpless as a doll and deserves pity. You, who are tender to the afflicted, should not kill her, innocent thing' (34-45).

Srī Suka went on: Though he thus sought to dissuade him by appealing to his sympathy and rousing his fears, he, cruel by nature, and a follower of the Asuras in his ways, would not desist, O scion of the Kurus. Seeing his obduracy, Ānakadundubhi (Vasudeva) decided that imminent death could be cheated only in one way. 'The intelligent man should try to defeat death with all his strength and skill. If he then fails, he will not be to blame. I shall

save this poor woman by delivering my children to him, who will be their death, if, that is, I have children, and this, their death, does not himself die in the meanwhile. Indeed why should not the contrary¹ happen? The ways of Providence are unfathomable; what seems imminent may be averted, what is averted may come to pass again. One can think of no cause other than destiny why a fire attacks one piece of timber rather than another; equally inscrutable is the cause of birth or death of any creature.' When he had decided on his course, exercising his best judgment, he laid himself out to please the wicked man with expressions of high regard. Distressed at heart, he put on a cheerful face and spoke with a laugh to the cruel and shameless creature. Vasudeva said: 'Surely, the danger to you that the disembodied voice spoke of is not from her, my good sir. I shall deliver to you her children, whom you fear' (46-54).

Srī Suka said: Kamsa acknowledged the truth of his words and gave up the thought of killing his cousin. Vasudeva was pleased, and went home praising him. In due course Devakī, in whom were all the gods, gave birth to eight sons, one every year, and a girl. Ānakadundubhi, horrified at the thought of telling a lie, delivered to Kamsa his first-born, Kīrtimān, with anguish in his heart. What indeed is there that the good will not suffer patiently, or the wise can long for; what, the base will blench from, or the resolute cannot renounce? Seeing the equanimity of the son of Sūra, and his staunchness in truth, Kamsa was much pleased, O King, and he said with a laugh, 'Let the child go, it is not him I fear. Is it not by your eighth child that death has been ordained for me?' Ānakadundubhi, assenting, took the child away. But he did not put much faith in the words of the evil man who knew no self-control (56-61).

Nanda and the other cowherds of Vraja and their womenfolk, the Vṛṣṇis, Vasudeva and the rest, and Devakī and other Yadu women, were practically all of them gods, O son of the Bharatas; as were, too, the kinsmen, relations and allies of the two clans and the retainers of Kamsa. The blessed Nārada came and revealed this to Kamsa, also the endeavours (of the gods) to destroy the

¹ That is, his children might kill Kamsa.

Daityas, who burdened the earth. When the sage had departed, Kamsa, concluding that the Yadus were gods and Vishnu was about to be born of Devakī's womb to compass his own death, put Devakī and Vasudeva in chains and confined them in their own home and slew each child of theirs as it was born, suspecting it might be the Lord Who knows no birth. Most kings on earth are so greedy of life and so much in love with worldly pleasures that they will kill father and mother, brothers and bosom friends. Knowing himself to be the great Asura Kālanemi, born into the world of men after his death at Vishnu's hands, he turned hostile to the Yadus. Placing under restraint Ugrasena, the King of the Yadus, Bhojas and Andhakas, he took over the rule of the Sūrasena country (62-69).

CHAPTER II

THE GODS HAIL THE ADVENT OF THE LORD

Srī Suka continued : Exceedingly strong himself, he, in league with the King of the Magadhas (Jarāśandha), harried the Yadus, with the aid of Pralamba, Baka and Chāṇūra, Trṇāvarta, Mahāśana (Aghāsura), Mushtika, Arishta, Dvidida, Pūtana, Keśi and Dhenuka, as well as other Asuras who were kings, such as Bāṇa and Bhauma (Naraka). Thus oppressed, they disappeared into the Kuru, Pāṇchāla and Kekaya countries, or settled down in places as far away as Sālva, Vidarbha, Nishadha, Videha and Kosala. Some few, who were kinsmen, adhered to him and served him (1-4).

When six of her children had been slain by Ugrasena's son, Devakī conceived her seventh child, the *amśa* of Vishnu known as Ananta, which brought her at once joy and grief. And the exalted Lord, the Soul of the universe, knowing the peril from Kamsa to the Yadus, who looked up to Him as their Deliverer, instructed Yoga-Māyā, telling her, 'Go to Vraja, gracious goddess, pleasant with its pastoral folk and kine. Rohiṇī, the wife of Vasudeva, lives in Nanda's cowherd settlement; and other wives of his live in secret places from fear of Kamsa. In Devakī's womb is the child who is My fraction known as Seshā. Quietly abstracting him,

place him in Rohiṇī's womb. I shall then be born, in My plenary puissance, as Devakī's son. And you shall be born of Yaśodā, Nanda's wife. Men shall worship you, supreme controller of the destinies of those who have desires, and granter of all boons, with incense, offerings and oblations. They will give you names and consecrate places to you on earth, calling you Durgā, Bhadrakālī, Vijayā, Vaishṇavī, Kumudā, Chandikā, Krishnā, Mādhavī, Kanyakā, Māyā, Nārāyaṇī, Isānī, Sārādā, and Ambikā. Because of the child's having been abstracted from the womb, they will call him Sankar-śaṇa in the world of men ; charming all hearts, he will be known as Rāma ; and excelling all men in strength, he will be called Bala' (5-13).

Thus ordered by the Lord, she obeyed His behest, saying, 'Yes, it shall be done,' and reverently walking round Him, she went down to the earth and did as she had been told. When Devakī's child had been transferred to Rohiṇī's womb by Yoga-nidrā, the citizens cried out, 'Alas, there has been a miscarriage !' (14-15).

The exalted Lord, the Soul of the universe, Who assures His devotees freedom from fear, thereupon entered the mind¹ of Ānakadundubhi in all His fullness. Bearing within himself the gracious image of the Supreme Lord, and blazing like the sun, he was unapproachable and awe-striking. Then the immaculate dame received and bore in her mind, even as the eastern sky bears the joy-giving moon, the determinate Form of Achyuta deposited by the son of Sūra, the incarnate Good Fortune of the worlds, the Soul of the universe, and her own soul too. Though she was thus become the abode of Him in Whom all the worlds abide, she did not rejoice the eyes of the world, being shut up in the house of the Lord of the Bhojas, like a light under a bushel, or luminous learning in a churl² of knowledge (16-19).

And Kamsa, as he looked at her with her innocent smile, bearing within her the Invincible, and lighting

¹ The Lord's birth was not the result of an ordinary physical union. ² This phrase of Hazlitt is an exact equivalent of *jñāna-khala*, signifying the selfish, antisocial type of learned man who does not impart his learning to the seeker.

up the house with her splendour, said to himself, 'It is, without a doubt, Hari Who dwells in her womb, intent on destroying me ; for never before have I seen her like this. Now, how should I act in this matter ? For act I must, and that quickly. No man, however intent on self-interest, would like to ruin his own reputation for valour. The killing of a woman—and she my own sister, and big with child too—would destroy my fame and prosperity and perhaps cost me my life. Life, to such a man, is hardly better than death. Even during his life-time people revile him for his cruelty and curse him saying, "When this wretch who thus prizes his body dies, he will surely go to hell." Reasoning thus, and confident in his own power, he dismissed the monstrous thought, and awaited Hari's advent, cherishing ill-will against Him. Thinking of Hrishikeśa incessantly, whatever he might be doing at the moment—sitting still or lying down, standing up or eating, or going about—he saw naught but Him in all world (20-24).

Brahmā and Bhava came there where Devakī was, along with the sages, Nārada and others, and the gods and their attendants, and praised Him, Who grants all desires, in beautiful words. 'We take refuge in Thee That willest truly what shall be, That art most surely attained through truth, and art the unchanging Truth of all time—being the Cause of the five elements, the Truth present in them, and the Truth that survives them. We take refuge in Thee That inspirest truthful and kindly speech and the equable outlook, and hast Truth for Thy essence. This primordial tree (the phenomenal universe) has one base, and bears two fruits ; it has three roots, four saps, five modes (of perception), six states, seven barks, eight boughs, nine hollows and ten leaves ; and two birds live in it. Thou art its sole parent, the sanctuary wherein it is laid up to rest, and its unfailing support. Those whose minds are clouded by Thy Māyā see Thee as many, not the enlightened (25-28).

"Thou, Whose essence is Consciousness, repeatedly assumest forms compact of *sattva* to protect the world of the moving and the stationary, bringing happiness to the virtuous, while striking down the wicked. Some few

rare souls there have been, O Lord of the lotus eyes, who, fixing their minds in rapt contemplation on Thee, the Abode of all that is good, came to place their trust wholly in Thy feet, looking upon them as a boat fashioned by the great for crossing the ocean of transmigratory existence. And, treating that ocean as a puddle no bigger than a calf's hoof, though others find it impassable and formidable, they crossed it by their own efforts; for Thou, O Self-luminous Lord, art lavish of Thy grace with Thy devotees. And they have left here the boat, Thy lotus feet, from the infinite love they bore to all creatures. Those others, O Lotus-eyed, who flatter themselves that they have achieved liberation, but whose minds are impure, because they are devoid of devotion to Thee, climb with infinite difficulty only to suffer a great fall when almost within reach of the goal, since they did not cherish Thy feet. Not so Thy devotees, O Mādhava, who, staunch in their love for Thee, do not stray in the least from the path. Guarded by Thee, O Lord, they tread fearlessly on the heads of the captains of the hosts of obstacles (29-33).

'To protect the world Thou assumest a form of pure *sattva* which, while enabling men to worship Thee through the study of the Veda, the performance of *karma*, the observance of austerities and the practice of contemplation, is also the dispenser of all blessings. O my Maker, if this Thy body of pure *sattva* were not, then that direct and plenary apprehension of Thee, which sweeps away ignorance and the notion of difference, would be impossible of attainment. From the functioning of man's faculties Thou mayest be known, but only inferentially as One from Whom comes their power, and by virtue of Whose control over them the world of objects is manifested. Thy forms and names cannot be comprehensively enumerated by the tale of Thy qualities, births and deeds; For Thy ways may at best be inferred by the exercise of the mind and known indirectly from the testimony of the scriptures; and these derive their light from Thee. And yet, as is well known, Thy devotees, O effulgent Lord, apprehend Thee directly in the act of adoration (34-36).

'He who constantly hears others sing the praises of

Thy names and forms and auspicious qualities, or himself extols them, or puts others in mind of them, and whose mind is wholly absorbed in the contemplation of Thy lotus feet while engaged in the act of worship, and so on, will never again be bound for birth and death. Happily, O Hari, Director and Controller of all that is, Thy very birth has lifted the burden off the earth, Thy feet. Ah ! how we shall rejoice to see earth and heaven bearing, by Thy gracious kindness, the imprint of those tender feet with their auspicious marks ! Indeed, O Lord, one can think of no reason why Thou, That art beyond the flux of transitory existence, shouldst at all be born on earth, unless it be that it pleaseth Thee to divert Thyself in this way ; since birth, life and death are attributed even to the *jīvātman* solely because of nescience in regard to Thee That art the Abode of Freedom. As Thou protectedst us many a time in the past, coming as Fish or Horse or Tortoise, as Man-lion, Boar or Swan, as Kshattriya, Brahmana or celestial, so do Thou now succour us. Dispel the burden of the earth, O First of the Yadus, salutations to Thee !' (37-40).

And the gods addressed these words to Devakī : 'Thanks be to heaven, mother, the Supreme Lord Himself has entered your womb with a part of His essence, for the welfare of us all. Have no fear of the Lord of the Bhojas, he is on the brink of death. Your son will protect the Yadus' (41).

Having fittingly extolled the Supreme Lord, Whose nature is wholly distinct from that of the universe, the gods returned to heaven with Brahmā and Isāna (42).

CHAPTER III

THE BIRTH OF SRI KRISHNA

Srī Suka said : In due course came the glorious day uniting in itself every auspicious quality ; the natal star of (Brahmā) the son of the Birthless being in the ascendant, and all constellations, planets and fixed stars exercising their most benefic aspects. The four quarters were serene, and clusters of bright stars had swung into the sky. Everywhere on earth, in the towns, cities, villages, cowherd settlements and mines, there was

abounding felicity ; the rivers ran clear and the pools were rich with lotus ; the forest glades were loud with birds and swarms of bees amidst their clustered blooms ; a pleasant wind blew, pure and fragrant ; the fires of the twice-born burned gracious and bright, and the hearts of the good and the gods rejoiced. When the advent of Him who knows no birth was imminent, the kettle-drums sounded in heaven, the Kinnaras and Gandharvas sang, the Siddhas and Chāraṇas hymned, the Vidyā-dharis and Apsarases danced, the sages and the gods coming together joyously showered flowers, and the clouds rumbled softly, echoing the ocean's surge. Then, at the hour of midnight, which ushered in the advent of the Lord Janārdana, when the darkness was at its most intense, Vishnu, Dweller in the heart's cave of all creatures, revealed Himself as He verily is, in Devakī, divinely beautiful, even as the full-orbed moon rises in the eastern sky (1-8).

Vasudeva beheld that wonder-child of the lotus eyes, with His four arms clasping the conch, the mace, the discus and other magnificent weapons, and the Srīvatsa mark on His breast. On His neck was the Kaustubha jewel, to which it added lustre. He was clad in yellow silks, and comely as the rain-cloud ; through His thousand curls played the sheen of the sparkling gems on the rich crown and ear-pendants ; He dazzled the eye with the splendour of girdle, armlet and bracelet. As he looked at Hari, Who had come as his son, with wondering eyes that were like blown buds, Ānakadundubhi was bathed in bliss ; and in his exuberant happiness at the advent of Krishna, he vowed to make a gift of ten thousand cows to the Brahmanas. Then, realizing that He was the Supreme Purusha, he, all his fear gone because he knew His might, praised, with head bowed low and joined palms and a mind that was pure, Him Who lit up the lying-in-chamber with His splendour, O son of the Bharatas (9-12).

Vasudeva said : ' I see with my own eyes, O Lord, Thee as Thou truly art, the Purusha Who is beyond Prakṛti and is of the nature of pure Self-Knowledge and Bliss, and Who illumines all minds. While Thou art verily That, Thou art thought of as entering this

phenomenal universe, composed of the three *guṇas*, after having created it at the beginning by Thy Power of Māyā. In fact Thou dost not enter it any more than these unchanged entities do; which when existing separately have disparate and particular powers, but which combine with each other and with their evolutes to produce the universe, and then seem to enter it, though actually they do not, since they exist in it already as the cause of its coming into being. Though Thou dost exist in objects that can be grasped by the senses, whose limited nature may be inferred from their characteristic perceptions, Thou art not Thyself apprehended by them when they apprehend those objects. For Thee there can be no such state as that of being inside or outside anything else; for naught else can obscure Thee That standest forth as all that is, That art the Soul of all, the All-Pervading, the ultimate Reality. He is an ignorant man who considers that in objects perceived by the *Ātman* there is anything really apart from the *Ātman*. Since reason shows that such objects have no more than a merely verbal existence, he is a fool who mistakes the unreal for the real. The Vedas speak of the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe as caused by Thee That art untouched by the *guṇas*, free from all desire, and immutable. There is no contradiction involved in speaking of all this as Thy work, because Thou art *Īśvara* as well as the *Brahma*, and the effects of the *guṇas* are attributed by courtesy to Thee, since they depend on Thee (13-19).

‘Thou, by Thy power of Māyā, assumest a form of a white complexion for the sustaining of the three worlds, another, red, accompanied by *rajas*, for the purpose of creation, yet another, black, by reason of *tamas*, for bringing about dissolution. Thou, O Omnipresent and Supreme Lord of all, art incarnate in my House from the desire to protect the world, and wilt surely destroy the armies deployed by the so-called Kshattriyas who command millions of Asura forces. But there is this wicked man, who hearing that Thou wert to be born into our family, killed Thy brothers, O Lord of the gods; and now, learning from his retainers of Thy descent, may be here any moment with upraised weapon’ (20-22).

Srī Suka went on : 'Seeing that her son had all the marks of the Mahāpurusha (Vishnu), Devakī smiled happily, though she dreaded Kamsa, and extolled Him. She said : 'That indescribable Reality Which the Vedas speak of as ever beyond apprehension, being the Uncaused Cause, the Limitless Vast, the Light of Consciousness, the Non-qualified, the Changeless, Pure Being, Attributeless, and Actionless—That Vishnu Thou verily art, as these eyes behold Thee : and Thou art, too, the Illuminer of all faculties. When at the end of the two halves of the life of Brahmā the phenomenal universe vanishes, the gross elements get merged in the subtle, and these and all other evolved entities are retracted into the unmanifest (Prakṛti) by the impetuous onset of Time, Thou alone remainest, and art known as Sesha. O Thou, Activator of Prakṛti, I seek refuge in Thee, the Ruler of the universe, the Sanctuary where fear does not enter, of Whom the Vedas say that that same time, which lasts for an immense period, being reckoned in units ranging from the second to the year, and causes the ceaseless revolution of the worlds, is Thy playful activity. Man who, terrified of the monster death, found no safety, fleeing to the remotest corners of the worlds, has by supreme good fortune attained Thy lotus feet this day, and rests well content, for death flees him. Protect us, who go in dread of Ugrasena's horrid son, Thou art the slayer of the fears of Thy servants. And do not make this Form of the Supreme Lord, fit object of meditation, visible to those who see with the eye of the flesh. Let not this wicked man know that Thou art my son, O Madhusūdana. Being a timorous woman, I fear Kamsa because of Thee. Veil here, O soul of the universe, this supernal form with the four arms, radiant with conch and discus, mace and lotus. The world of men might scoff at the notion that Thou, the Supreme Lord, on Whose person the universe, manifested at the end of the long night of dissolution, occupies but a little space, hadst entered my womb' (23-31).

The Lord told her : 'When I was born to you in the Swāyambhuva Manvantara, you were known as Prīti, O loyal spouse, and this was the spotless Prajāpati

Sutapas. When you two were commanded by Brahmā to propagate progeny, you engaged in intense austerities, strictly controlling the senses. Patiently putting up with the incidents of the different seasons, rain and wind and sun, snow and heat, purging yourselves utterly of the impurities of the mind by the control of the breath, subsisting on dry leaves and air, you worshipped Me with your minds stilled, desiring from Me all felicity. As you thus practised extraordinarily severe austerities with your minds absorbed in Me, twelve thousand celestial years passed. Then, being pleased with you, who constantly cherished Me in your hearts, practising self-discipline, earnestness and devotion, I, Lord of Bounty, appeared before you, O blameless one, in this form, desirous of granting whatever you wanted. When I said, "Name a boon", you wanted a son like Me. Being a childless couple, who had never tasted the pleasures of the senses, you did not ask for liberation even of Me, bewildered by the Lord's Māyā. When I had departed, you, your wish fulfilled by the promise of a son like Me, enjoyed the life of the senses. Because I could find none else in the world who could be said to be My equal in virtue, magnanimity and other higher qualities, I was myself born as your son, and was known as Prśnigarbha in that birth. It was, again, of you that I was born, when I was begotten of Aditi by Kaśyapa, and was known as Upendra, and also as Vāmana from my dwarfish stature. In this third birth too I have, taking the same form, come again as a son to you, who are but those two. I speak the truth, O faithful spouse. I have shown both of you this form first, so that you may know that the child born to you is Me; since it is not possible to recognise Me in a human body. Thinking constantly of Me with love in your hearts, looking upon Me as your son and as the Brahma, you shall reach Me, the supreme goal.' Śrī Suka said: Having said this, Hari was silent, and by His own Power of Māyā turned into an ordinary infant before His parents' eyes (32-46).

At the very moment when the son of Sūra, prompted by the exalted Lord, took his child from the lying-in-chamber and wanted to get out of the house, there was

delivered of the wife of Nanda the child that was Yoga-Māyā, who is in truth birthless. The warders having been rendered insensible and the citizens put to sleep by her, the great doors fastened with chains and bolts opened of themselves, when Vasudeva came forth carrying Krishna, as darkness retreats before the sun. There was heavy rain with a mild rumbling, and Sesha came close behind, keeping the water off with his spread hood. With Maghavā (Indra) sending down ceaseless showers, that stream, the younger sister¹ of Yama, swollen with the spate of waters to a great depth, filled with the foam of racing waves, and turbulent with a thousand terrifying eddies, made way for Him as the ocean had done for the Lord of Śrī². The son of Sūra, reaching the cowherd settlement of Nanda, and seeing there the herdsmen plunged in slumber by the action of Yoga-Nidrā, placed his son on the bed of Yaśodā, and taking her daughter, went back to his house. Depositing the baby girl on Devakī's bed, he fastened the fetters on his feet and sat locked in as before. Yaśodā, the wife of Nanda, knew only that she had given birth to a child; tired, and taken in by Yoga-Nidrā, she had not noted its sex (47-53).

CHAPTER IV

KAMSA DELUDED BY YOGA-MĀYĀ

Śrī Suka said : The inner and outer doors had closed again as before, when the guards, hearing a child's cry, started up. They ran to the King of the Bhojas and told him of the birth of Devakī's child, which he was expecting in dread. Jumping up from his bed in great perturbation of mind, thinking, 'This is my Death' he hastened to the lying-in-chamber with stumbling steps and dishevelled hair. The good lady, so forlorn, implored him, her own brother, piteously, saying, 'This shall be your daughter-in-law, O noble one—you must not kill a woman. Many children, flamelike, have been done to death by you, impelled by destiny; spare me this one little daughter. Am I not your own younger

¹ The river Yamunā. ² The Lord incarnate as Sri Rama.

sister, O my lord, who sorrows for her children slain ? Grant me, unfortunate, this my last child, dear' (1-6).

Srī Suka said : Though thus she begged him and wept most piteously, hugging her daughter to her bosom, the ruffian snatched her from her hand ; with loud threats. Seizing by the feet the child, his own sister's, and that too just born, he dashed her on the rocky ground, all affection prised out of him by self-interest. But she flew out of his hands, and changing instantly into the goddess, flew into the sky ; and there she, the younger sister of Krishna, was seen with her eight mighty arms carrying weapons, adorned with celestial chaplets and raiment, unguents and gem-set jewels, and armed with bow and arrow, trident, shield and sword, conch and discus and mace. As the Siddhas, Chāraṇas and Gandharvas, Apsarases, Kinnaras and Uragas, bringing her abundant offerings, sang her praises, she said to him, ' What shall it avail you to kill me, you dince ? Your old enemy, who will destroy you, is already born elsewhere ; do not wantonly slaughter poor wretches.' Having disclosed this to him, the goddess Māyā took up Her abode on earth in many shrines, under various names (7-13).

Kamsa was astounded to hear what she said. Releasing Devaki and Vasudeva, he said to them humbly, ' Alas, my sister, ah, my brother, I, sinner that I am, have slain many children of yours, as a cannibal destroys his own children. I am a blackguard who has cast aside pity and discarded his relations and friends ; I do not know to what world I shall go, having lived a life no better than death, like one who has committed Brahmanamurder. Even the gods¹ lie, not men merely ; and believing them I, wretch, slaughtered my sister's babes. Do not grieve, blessed souls, for your children, who have but reaped the fruit of their own *karma*. Living beings neither live for ever nor live together for long, being in the hands of destiny. While all creatures come and go, like things made of earth, the soul in them suffers no more change than earth does. The man who does not realize this truth confound the body with the Self and thinks of his own self as different from

¹ Referring to the voice in the sky (Ch. I).

another's; the meeting and parting of bodies is then real for him, and there is no cessation of *samsāra*. Therefore, my dear, do not grieve for your children, though I have slain them, since none can avoid reaping the fruit of his own *karma*. So long as a man, in ignorance of his own soul, remains attached to his body and thinks of himself as slaying or being slain, he will remain bound to the role of oppressor and oppressed. Pray forgive me my wickedness, the good have compassion for the wretched.' Saying this with a tearful face, he clasped the feet of his brother-in-law and of his sister. And, reassured by the words of the divine maid he removed the shackles on Devakī and Vasudeva and showed his affection for them in various ways (14-24).

Seeing her brother so penitent, Devakī was mollified, and forgave him. Vasudeva said to him with a laugh, 'It is even as you say, O illustrious one; ignorance induces egotism, and that leads men to discriminate in terms of "mine" and "thine". Those who see difference succumb to grief, joy, fear, hatred, greed, delusion and pride, and do not see the Lord contriving the destruction of creatures at each other's hands through their passions' (25-27).

Srī Suka said: Thus assured in all sincerity by the pacified Devakī and Vasudeva, Kamsa took leave of them and went home. When the night was past, Kamsa sent for his counsellors, and told them all that Yoga-Nidrā had said. Hearing their master's words, those men, who were Asuras and enemies of the gods, whom they hated, and not very far-seeing, told him, 'If that be so, O Lord of the Bhojās, this very day we shall slay all infants in cities, villages, and cowherd settlements and other places, whether less than ten days old or more. What can the gods do, strive as they might—those cowards in battle, who tremble to hear the twanging of your bow? Battered¹ on all sides by the hail of arrows you showered on them, they left off fighting and fled for dear life. Some of the gods threw down their arms and surrendered with folded hands and woe-begone faces; others, their clothes coming unknotted and their hair streaming,

¹ J. Suggests that this may refer to some actual battle in the past in which the gods were worsted by Kamsa.

confessed, "We are afraid." You do not attack those who have forgotten their missiles and other weapons, or lost their chariots, those who are surrounded by danger on all sides, or who, being engaged with another adversary, have their backs turned to you; those who have had their bow broken, or those who will not fight. What can the gods do, who are valiant when there is no danger, who talk big where there is no fighting to be done; or Hari, who is in hiding¹; or Sambhu, the denizen of the forest²; or Indra, the weakling; or Brahmā, the anchorite? (31-36).

'All the same, we think that the gods, being rivals and enemies, should not be ignored. Therefore entrust us, your retainers, with the task of digging them up by the roots. Just as any ailment, neglected, gains a foothold in the body and becomes unamenable to treatment, or the senses, left uncontrolled, become uncontrollable, even so a foe who has consolidated his strength becomes unshakable. Now, Vishnu is the root of the gods, and He is there where Eternal Dharma is. And Dharma is rooted in the Vedas, the cow, the Brahmana, the life of austerities, the sacrifices with full fees. Therefore, O King, let us destroy by all means Brahmanas who expound the Vedas, those who practise austerities and offer sacrifices, and the cows that yield the milk for oblations in the fire. Brahmanas, cows, the Vedas, penance, truth, self-discipline, tranquillity, faith, compassion, endurance and sacrifices—these are but different bodies of Hari. And He is the leader of the gods, the foe of the Asuras, the Dweller in the cave of the heart. All the gods, with Isvara and the Four-faced One at their head, have Him for their support. To harass the *ṛshis* is the surest way of destroying Him' (37-42).

Sri Suka said: Deliberating thus with his evil counsellors, Kamsa, the wicked Asura, who had the noose of death round his neck, decided that it would be to his advantage to harass Brahmanas. Ordering the slaughter-loving Dānavas, who could assume any form at will, to slay good men wherever they might be found, he

¹ Being inside every one as the Inner Ruler. ² The reference may be to Śiva's living in the forest called Ilāvṛta, from which He excluded all males by a curse.

retired. And they, restless by disposition, bemused by ignorance, carried on hostilities against the good, with death close at their heels. Any offence against those who are worthy of veneration destroys life, prosperity, fame, Dharma, the prospect of better worlds, the blessings that one most desires, and all felicity (43-46).

CHAPTER V

REJOICINGS IN NANDA'S GOKULAM

Sri Suka went on : Rejoicing at the birth of a son, the large-hearted Nanda took a bath and purified himself, and adorning himself suitably, sent for Brahmanas well versed in the Vedas and got them to pronounce blessings upon the child and perform the birth-rites according to the rules, and to worship the manes and the gods. He gifted to the Brahmanas two hundred thousand cows, well-bedecked, and seven mounds of sesamum seed covered with great quantities of gems and cloth of gold. Substances are purified by lapse of time, by bathing or washing, by purificatory rites, by the practice of austerities, by the offering of sacrifices, by the giving of gifts, and by the cultivation of contentment ; while the soul is purified by the knowledge of the Self (1-4).

Brahmanas pronounced blessings, bards, minstrels and heralds chanted auspicious praises, singers sang and drums and kettle-drums boomed, again and again. The houses in the cowherd settlement had their doorways, courtyards and inner apartments swept and washed ; the whole place was decorated with variegated flags and buntings, and festoons of flower garlands, scarves and tender shoots, hung over the doorways. The bulls, cows and calves were anointed with turmeric and oil and decked with pleasing mineral powders, garlands of peacock plumes, scarves and gold necklaces. The cowherds, putting on rich clothes and jewels, coats and turbans, came bringing many presents, O King. Their womenfolk, hearing of the birth of a son to Yaśodā, were in great joy ; clad in fine raiment, applying kohl to their eyes, and decorating themselves, the large-hipped women, with the fresh saffron that looked like filaments on the lotus-face, hastened forth, with quivering breasts, carrying

gifts. As the Gopis, dressed in gay-coloured clothes, and adorned with sparkling gem-set ear-pendants, necklaces of gold coins, and bracelets, went towards Nanda's home, the flowers on their hair slipping down and streaming on the way, they delighted the eye with the charm of their tremulous ear-drops, quivering breasts and swinging pearl necklaces (5-12).

Calling blessings on the child, with the words, 'May you long protect us!' they smeared each other with oil mixed with turmeric and water, and they sang aloud the glories of Him Who knows no birth. Many and various musical instruments were played at that festival of the coming of Krishna, the Lord of the universe, the Eternal, to Nanda's Vraja. The cowherds in high glee splashed and smeared each other with curds and milk, ghee and water, and bespattered each other with butter. The generous Nanda distributed clothes, jewels and cattle-wealth among them, and made similar gifts to minstrels, heralds and bards and others who lived by their skills. The noble man suitably honoured others too, giving them what they desired, for the propitiation of Vishnu and the well-being of his son. The fortunate Rohini, welcomed by Nanda Gopa, and adorned with magnificent raiment, garlands and necklaces, busied herself with the offices of hospitality. From that time, O King, Nanda's Vraja teemed with prosperity, and because of the attraction of Hari's presence, became the pleasure-ground of the Goddess Ramā (13-18).

Charging the cowherds with the care of the cow-colony, Nanda went to Mathurā, O foremost of the Kurus, to pay Kamsa the annual tribute. Vasudeva, hearing that his 'brother'¹ Nanda had come, and knowing that he had paid the tribute to the King, went to his camping grounds. On seeing him he sprang up in joy, like the body when life returns, and overpowered by his emotion, embraced him whom he loved so well. Hospitably entertained and seated comfortably, Vasudeva enquired about his health with affectionate concern, and then, with his mind running on his sons, went on

¹ Nanda was the son of the Vaiśya wife of Vasudeva's paternal uncle.

to say, O King, 'Heaven be thanked, brother, you have a child now at this advanced age, after having been childless so long and given up all hopes of progeny. Caught in the whirlpool of life, I feel as if reborn this day, for by great good fortune I have seen you; so rarely is it given to one to look on the face of a friend. It is no more possible for friends than for drift-wood swept away by a flood to keep together for long, since men's *karmas* are various and unique to each (19-25).

'Is Br̥had-vanā (the big forest), where you now live with your friends, good for cattle, healthy, and provided with plenty of water, grass and herbage? Brother, how is my son who is living with his mother in your settlement, and who looks upon you as his father, being lovingly cared for by both of you? The pursuit of the three ends of life is legitimate when one can share their blessings with one's loved ones. When they are unhappy, these bring no satisfaction' (26-28).

Nanda replied, 'Alas, many of your sons by Devaki were killed by Kamsa; the one child that remained, the youngest, was a girl, and she too has gone to heaven. It is destiny that puts an end to all things, even as it is destiny that sets them going. He who knows that destiny decides one's lot does not sorrow' (29-30).

Vasudeva told him, 'Now that you have paid the annual tribute to the King, and we have seen each other, you must not stay here long; there are portents of evil in Gokulam'. Śrī Śuka said: Thus urged by the son of Sūra, Nanda and the other Gopas, taking leave of him, went home to Gokulam in their ox-drawn carts (31-32).

CHAPTER VI

THE SLAYING OF PŪTANĀ

Śrī Śuka went on: Nanda, reflecting as he went that the words of Sūra's son had never failed to come true, feared some calamity, and besought the mercy of Hari. Pūtanā, the dread child-murderess, instigated by Kamsa, was going about killing infants in the cities, villages and cowherd settlements. These she-demons, you should know, prevail only where people, while performing

karmas, do not hear the names of the Lord of the Sātvatas recited, which have power to destroy them. Pūtanā, who flew by air, once came to Nanda's cowherd settlement. Disguising herself as a beautiful woman by her skill in witchcraft, the lewd creature entered Vraja. When they saw the lovely woman with the jasmine twined in her plaited hair, her slim middle crushed as it were between her big hip and her breasts, her fine clothes, her face adorned with curls bright with the lustre of her dancing ear-pendants, and the smiling sidelong glances that ravished the minds of the Vraja folk, the Gopis seemed to wonder, as they looked at the lotus in her hand, whether it might not be Sṛī herself of the surpassing loveliness come to see her Lord. Looking for infants, the child-snatcher saw by chance in Nanda's house the child who was to be the death of evil-doers, lying on his bed, his infinite lustre hidden like fire under ashes. He, the Supreme Lord, Who rules all things, animate and inanimate, knowing that she was the demon child-killer, kept His eyes closed. And she took on her lap the Eternal, Who had come to destroy the wicked, as a man might in ignorance lay hold of a sleeping snake, thinking it was a rope. His mothers, who first noticed her when she was already inside the house, were overawed by the splendour of that magnificent woman, whose heart was as cruel as her ways were winning, like a sword hidden in a fine scabbard; they sat just looking on (1-9).

The horrid woman, sitting down where she was, took the infant on her lap and put Him to her breast full of virulent poison too potent to be digested. And the Lord, crushing the teat with both hands, sucked in a great rage, sucking the life out of her with the milk. 'Leave off, leave off now, that will do', she cried out in agony, harrowed in every vital part; her eyes bulging, her arms and feet kicking convulsively, her body covered with sweat, she wailed aloud. Under that din, booming and crashing like thunder, the earth and its mountains, and the heavens with their planets shook, the lower worlds and the four quarters reverberated, and the people threw themselves down on the ground, fearing a thunderbolt. Her breasts thus racked with pain, the

she-demon, who had resumed her true form, fell down dead in the pyre, like Vṛtra smitten by the thunderbolt, mouth agape, hair dishevelled, hands and feet stretched out. By its mere fall that body pulverized all trees within twelve miles of the place, O King, amazing everybody (9-14).

Looking at that body, with the mouth full of fierce tusks of the size of a plough-beam, the nostrils like mountain caves, the horrid paps like huge rocks that had slipped down from the mountain-side, the streaming red hair, the eyes deep as blind wells, the frightful sand-bank-like buttocks, the arms and feet and thighs like dams, the belly like a pool emptied of water, the Gopas and Gopis, their hearts and ears and heads split by the d'n she had made, were terrified. When they saw the child unconcernedly playing on her breast, the Gopis ran and picked Him up in great agitation (15-18).

Along with Yaśodā and Rohiṇi, they did the customary rites for warding off evil from every direction, swinging a cow's tail over Him, and so on. Getting the child sprinkled with cow's urine first and then with the dust raised by the cow's hoof, they dotted Him with cow-dung on twelve parts of the body, uttering the appropriate names of the Divine. Then, performing *āchamana*, they did *bija-nyāsa*, separately for the arms and the other limbs, first on themselves and then on the child, with the incantation, 'May the Birthless protect your feet, the Wearer of the Kausthubha (Manimān) your knees, the Lord of the Sacrifice your thighs, Achyuta your loins, the Horse-visaged your belly, Keśava your heart, Iśa your breast, the sun-god your neck, Viṣṇu your arms, He-of-the-wide-strides your face, and Iśvara your head. May Hari with the discus stand before you, and Hari with the mace behind you; may the Slayer of Mādhua, armed with the bow, and He-who-knows-no-birth, armed with the sword, stand on either side of you; may the Illustrious, conch in hand, guard you at the four corners, Upendra above, Tārkaṣhya below, and the Supreme, armed with the plough, on all sides. May Hṛshikeśa protect the sense organs, Nārāyaṇa the vital airs, the Lord of the White Island the intelligence, the Lord of Yoga the mind,

Prāṇigarbha the intellect, the Supreme Lord the ego. May Govinda protect you at play, Mādhava when you sleep, Vaikuntha when you walk, the Lord of Śrī when you are sitting down, and the Consumer of the sacrificial oblations, the terror of all evil spirits, when you eat. May the ghouls, she-demons, goblins, evil spirits that possess children, elementals, the souls of the dead, ogres, Yakshas, Rākshasas and interposers of obstacles, Kotarā, Revatī, Jyeshthā, Pūtanā, Mātṛkā and others, the powers that cause delusions and fits, those that afflict the body, the vital breath and the sense-organs, the great cataclysms that overtake one in dreams, and the evil spirits that afflict old and young,—may they all perish in terror at the utterance of the name of Vishnu' (19-29).

Śrī Śuka said : When the child had thus had charms pronounced over Him by the Gopis, who were bound to Him by the ties of love, his mother fed Him at the breast, and then laid Him down to sleep. Nanda and the other Gopas, returning from Mathurā, reached Vraja just then, and saw Pūtanā's body and were amazed at the sight. 'Ah, he is surely a seer or a great yogi ; how else could Ānakadundubhi have foretold the very peril that we have now seen ?' The people of Vraja, hacking the body with the axe, carried it limb by limb to a distant place, and there burnt it on a pyre of logs. The smoke from the burning body, whose sins had been destroyed instantly when Krishna fed at the breast, had the fragrance of aloes. Pūtanā, murderess of the world's children and bloodthirsty fiend, attained the goal of the good by giving Hari her breast, though with the intention of killing Him. How much more readily, then, should they who doted on Krishna, the Paramātmā, as His mother did, and gave Him, with faith and devotion, even a little of what He supremely relished ? She at whose breast the Lord had fed, treading on her body with the feet that are planted in the hearts of His devotees and are adored by those whom the world adores, attained, demon though she was, a goal that was worthy of his mother; how much more surely, then, should such be the case with the motherly

women¹ and the cows whose milk He drank at the teat? The women whose milk, gushing in maternal love, the exalted Lord, the Son of Devaki, Who grants *kaivalya* and all else, drank to His heart's content, and who ever looked upon Him as their son—never more for them, O King, the cycle of birth and death started by nescience (30-40).

Sniffing the fragrance that came from the pyre, those Vraja folk² wondered, as they came to the cowherd settlement, 'What is this? Where does it come from?' Hearing the Gopas tell of Pūtānā's coming, and all that followed, and of her death and the safety of the child, they were filled with wonder. The great-hearted Nanda, hugging his child, rescued from the jaws of death, kissed him on the crown of the head, and felt supremely happy, O best of Kurus. The man who hears with faith this tale of Pūtānā's liberation, the marvellous exploit of the child Krishna, comes to love Govinda (41-44).

CHAPTER VII

CART KICKED DOWN AND TRŪNAVARTĀ SLAIN

The King said: 'All the exploits that the Lord Hari performed in His various incarnations undoubtedly delight the ear and charm the mind, great sir. Be pleased therefore to tell us, if you are so graciously inclined, those entrancing tales, in particular, listening to which even the ordinary mortal shakes off the weariness of the spirit and sheds his multifarious desires, and his heart gets purified ere long, and filled with devotion to Hari and friendship for His devotees. And tell us all the stories that you can think of, relating to the marvellous childhood exploits of Krishna, Who, having come into the world of men, conformed to their ways' (1-3).

¹ The word applies to all the Gopis and cows whose children and calves Krishna impersonated for a whole year; see Chapter XIII.

² These might be a party (other than Nanda and those who went with him to Mathurā) who returned to the village, after a visit elsewhere, when the body was being burnt.

Srī Suka said : ‘ On the day of the ceremonial bath for the festival of the child’s turning prone on his belly, which happened to be the day of His birth-star too, the good lady of the house gave her child his bath in the presence of the assembled womenfolk, while music played and songs were sung and Brahmanas chanted blessings. When the child had been bathed and the Brahmanas, given food, clothes, garland; and cows to their liking, had pronounced benedictions on him, Nanda’s spouse gently laid the child down on his bed, his eyes full of sleep. In the happy excitement of the *autthānika* ceremony, the hearty woman, busy entertaining the assembled inhabitants of Vraja, d’d not hear her son cry. He cried, hungering for the breast, and flung up his feet. Struck by the tiny foot of the child, soft as a tender shoot, the cart under which he lay overturned, throwing out the vessels in it, which held the various milk products, while the axle and the wheels turned topsyturvy, and the yoke broke. When they saw that, Yaśodā and the other women who had come for the festival, as well as Nanda and the rest, were amazed by the sight and greatly perturbed, wondering how the cart could have fallen upside down. While the Gopas and the Gopis could not make up their minds, the children told them, ‘ It was really the child who kicked it down as he wept’. But the Gopas would not believe that, dismissing it as child-en’s prattle. Measureless was the strength of that child, but they did not know it (4-10).

Yaśodā took up her weeping son, and fearing it might be the work of evil spirits, had benedictions pronounced by Brahmanas with the uttering of Vedic *mantras*, and gave Him her breast. The cart having been placed back in its old position by hefty herdsmen, and all its contents restored, the Brahmanas made oblations in the fire, and worshipped the cart with curd, unbroken rice, *darbha* grass and water. The devout Nanda Gopa, strong in his faith that the blessings of those who are by nature truthful and free from the carping spirit, mendacity, hypocrisy, intolerance, cruelty and pride, never go in vain, had the child bathed by the worthy Brahmanas in water consecrated with the chanting

of Sāma, Rk. and Yajus hymns, and containing holy herbs ; and he got them to pronounce blessings on Him and make oblations in the fire. Then he gave them sumptuous food, and being solicitous of his child's welfare, made them gifts of cows possessed of every excellence, and adorned with scarves, garlands and gold collars. And those Brahmanas, who were well versed in the Vedas and had achieved self-control, gave the child their blessings, (and they were fully efficacious, you may be sure) ; the blessings of such men never go in vain (11-17).

When the good woman was once dandling her child on her lap, she was so oppressed by His weight—He felt as heavy as a mountain-peak—that she had to put him down ; marvelling at it, she lifted up her mind in prayer to the Supreme Lord of the universe and went about the day's work. An Asura named Trnāvarta, a servant of Kamsa, came there under his orders in the guise of a whirlwind and carried off the seated child, blotting out the cowherd settlement from view, blinding the eyes with dust and filling all points of the compass with a terrible din. The byre was veiled in dust and darkness for a while. Yaśodā could not find her son where she had left Him. Dazed and battered by the grit and sand that Trnāvarta scattered, no one could see either himself or others. In the dust-storm raised by the fierce whirlwind, the poor mother could not perceive which way her son had gone, and she threw herself down on the ground, like a cow grieving for its dead young, and mourned him piteously, recalling fond memories. When the fury of the wind scattering dust had abated, the Gopis heard her wailing close by ; and seeing nowhere the son of Nanda Gopa, they too wept, their hearts filled with regrets, their faces bathed in tears (18-25).

As Trnāvarta, disguised as a whirlwind, was carrying off Krishna, his speed slackened. He managed somehow to rise into the sky, but could not go further because of the immense burden he had to carry. Thinking, from his tremendous weight, that He must be all rock, he tried to, but could not rid himself of the wonder-child, who clutched him by the throat. Unable to move because of the stranghold on his neck, his eyes bulging

from their sockets, his throat uttering a muffled groan, the Asura fell down dead in Vraja, and the child fell with him. The weeping women gathered there saw the terrible body fallen from the sky and shattered on the rocks, like the 'Three-fortresses' struck down by the arrow of Rudra. Astonished, they took Krishna, who was hanging on to his breast, and carried Him to his mother. Having recovered, safe and sound from the jaws of death, Him who had been carried off by the cannibal into the sky, Nanda and the other Gopas and the Gopis rejoiced exceedingly (26-30).

'Ah, how marvellous that the child, whom the Rākshasa had committed to death, has come back! The cruel dastard has been destroyed by his own wickedness; the good soul is freed from peril by his equability. What austerities practised we, or worship offered to Adhokshaja, what works for the public good did we do, or rites for personal purity, what alms did we bestow, or compassion show to living things, that Heaven has been pleased to let us have the child back from the dead, gladdening his kin!' Nanda Gopa, astonished at the many incredible things that had been happening in the Great Forest, was more than ever inclined to treat Vasudeva's words with respect (31-33).

Once the lovely woman, gathering her child in her arms and placing him on her lap, gave Him her streaming breast, her heart flooded with love. Fondling His smiling face, when He had almost finished drinking, she saw, as he yawned, all this (inside His mouth), O King—the sky, earth and heaven, the starry host, the four quarters, the sun and the moon, fire and air, the seas and island continents, the mountains and the streams, the forests, and all created things, moving and non-moving. Thus, seeing the entire universe all of a sudden, she of the fawn eyes fell into a trembling, O King, and closing her eyes, sat amazed (34-37).

CHAPTER VIII

THE NAMING CEREMONY

Sri Suka said : Garga, the family priest of the Yadus, a man of intense austerities, went to Nanda's cow colony, O King, at the instance of Vasudeva. On seeing him, he (Nanda) was greatly pleased, and he rose up with folded hands to welcome him. Prostrating himself before him, he paid him all honours, looking upon him as Adhokshaja Himself. When he had taken a comfortable seat and received hospitality, Nanda asked him, pleasing him with his sincere and kindly speech, 'What can we do, O Brahman, for one who knows no lack? If the great choose to bestir themselves, it can only be for the good of men who live the worldly life, distracted by cares, and not for any other purpose, venerable sir. The science of the stars, which brings knowledge that is beyond the reach of the senses, and through which men may gain insight into causes and effects (the results of past *karma*), was given to the world by you. And you are foremost among the knowers of the Veda. Be pleased to perform the sacraments for these two children. The Brahmana is the Guru by birth of all men' (1-6).

Garga answered : 'I am the family priest of the Yadus, as all the world knows. If I do the sacraments for your son, Kamsa might think he was the son of Devaki. The wicked man, having heard what Devaki's little girl said, must be constantly brooding over the thought that Devaki's eighth child could not possibly be a girl; and reflecting on your friendship with Anakadundubhi, he might become suspicious. If he should kill the child, that would be a disaster for us'. Nanda suggested, 'Please do the bare sacraments for the twice-born, with the preliminary Vedic blessings, for these children secretly here in the byre, without the knowledge of even my own people' (7-10).

Sri Suka said : Being thus requested to do what he had himself wished to, the Brahmana, his identity undisclosed, did the rite of giving names to the children in strict privacy. Garga said : 'This son of Rohini, charming the hearts of his friends and kin by his qualities, will be called Rama; from his exceeding strength, he

will be known as Bala ; and because he will be a cementing force among the Yadus, he will be known as Sankar-shaṇa. This your son took a body in three successive *yugas*, each time of a different complexion, white, red and yellow, Now he is dark-complexioned. This son of yours was once born somewhere as the son of Vasudeva, and that is why, as the learned will explain, he is known as the glorious Vāsudeva. Your son has many names and forms appropriate to his qualities and achievements. I do not know them all, neither does the world at large. He will rejoice the hearts of the Gopas and their colony, and bring you great good fortune. Through him you will instantly get over all dangers. In days of yore, O master of Vraja, good people, harried by marauders in a state of anarchy, vanquished them when they obtained his protection and support. The fortunate ones who give him their love will never know defeat at the hands of enemies, any more than the followers of Vishnu do at the hands of the Asuras. This son of yours, O Nanda, is thus the equal of Nārāyana by reason of his virtues, his splendour, fame and greatness ; look after him with all vigilance'. When Garga left, having instructed him thus, Nanda was exceedingly happy, regarding himself as infinitely blest (11-20).

Within a short while Rama and Keśava were playing in the cow colony, moving on their hands and knees. Dragging their feet as they crawled in the slush of the byre, charming the ear with the music of their bells, themselves finding a rare pleasure in it, they would follow for a step or two behind those who were going about their business, only to turn back and hurry to their mothers' side, as though full of childish fears. Their mothers, whose breasts streamed with milk in the tenderness of their love, would hug them, so delightful with the sandal paste and the mire on them, and suckling them, would gaze, as they greedily drank, at their faces with the innocent smile and the little teeth partly showing, and go into raptures (21-23).

When they were old enough for the childish pranks that delight women, the women of Vraja, seeing them dragged about within the settlement by the calves they had caught by the tail, laughed and enjoyed themselves.

immensely, neglecting their household duties. Unable to keep their children, who were constantly flitting about, absorbed in play, from exposing themselves to danger from horned cattle, fire, fanged creatures, sword, water, bird or thorn, and to attend to their own domestic work at the same time, their mothers were in a perpetual flutter of happy distraction (24-25).

Within a short time, O royal sage, Rama and Krishna were romping in Gokula, no longer grazing their knees. And the Lord Krishna, accompanied by Rama, began playing with His companions, bringing delight to the women. The Gopis, watching Krishna's delightful childish caprices, went in a body to His mother and said: 'Sometimes he unlooses the calves at the wrong hour, and laughing to hear us cry out, eats the sweet curds and milk got by thievish tricks, dividing the loot with the monkeys before he eats; if they will have no more, he breaks the pot. If he gets nothing to eat, he gets wild with the people of the house, and sets the infant children squealing before he flings out. When the Gopis are absorbed in household concerns, he contrives, with a stool or mortar, to get at what is placed beyond his reach—for he knows what is contained in the pots placed on swings, and how to make holes in them—lighting up what he is after in a dark room by the lustre of his own body arrayed in brilliants. Likewise, O comely dame, he does impudent things inside the houses, dirtying them. And having done all the mischief he can with his thief's tricks, here he comes and stands, the very picture of innocence!' When thus the women, looking the while at the gracious face with the eyes full of fear, chronicled His doings to her, she, her face breaking into a smile, could not bring herself to chide Him (26-31).

Once when Rama and other Gopa children had been playing, they came and told His mother, 'Krishna ate earth'. Catching hold of Him by the arm and speaking sharply to Him for His own good, Yasoda asked, as He looked at her with eyes that fluttered in alarm, 'Why did you eat earth on the sly, you naughty boy? These children, your friends, as well as your elder brother, say you did.' 'I did not, mother, they all

lie. You can look into my mouth for yourself and see if they spoke the truth.' She said, 'If that is so, open your mouth', and the exalted Lord Hari, Whose superhuman power was in no way inhibited, though He played at being a man-child, opened His mouth (32-36).

Therein she saw at a glance the entire universe—all things, moving and non-moving, the sky, the four quarters, the terrestrial globe with its mountains, island continents and oceans, its winds¹ and lightning fire, and its moon and stars, the celestial world, the outer girdle of waters, fire and air and *ākāśa*, the cognitive senses, the conative senses, the mind, the subtle elements, and the three *gunas*. Seeing through the open mouth that marvellous spectacle of the universe inside her son, with its infinite diversity of creatures distinguished by difference of *jīva*, *kāla*, nature, past *karma* and the residual impressions thereof, and seeing herself and Vraja too contained in that universe, she was assailed by grave doubts and misgivings. 'Could this be a dream, or the *Māyā* of Hari, or a mere hallucination, alas, that visits me? Or might it be some ineffable power that is native to this child of mine? I make my prostrations to That Which is beyond the reach of will and mind, action and speech, in Which, by Which and from Which the universe is directly cognized, and Which in Its essence wholly baffles thought. May He be my refuge, by Whose power of *Māyā* I am led to entertain such foolish notions as "This is me; this is my husband, the master of Vraja; I am his spouse and mistress of all his wealth; this (Krishna here) is my son; the Gopis, the Gopas and the abundance of cattle wealth are all mine"' (37-42).

When the Gopi had thus sensed the truth, He, the All-Powerful, All-Pervading Lord, wrought in her mind the magic of mother-love through the Power of *Māyā* that is Vishnu's own. Forthwith, forgetting all she had seen, the Gopi took her son on her lap, and became her old self, her heart flooded with love. Hari, Whose glory is proclaimed by the Vedas and the Upanishads, the

¹ The 'Pravahaṇa-vāyu' which keeps the planets moving.

Sāṅkhya, Yoga and devotional scriptures, was to her but her son (43-45).

The King asked, 'What uniquely meritorious thing had Nanda done, O Brahman—and what the supremely blest Yaśodā, at whose breast Hari fed—that it should have brought them this good fortune, denied even to His parents, of witnessing Krishna's glorious childhood pastimes, which are sung even today by the seers, dissipating the sins of men?' (46-47).

Srī Suka said : Drona, first of the Vasus, along with his wife Dharā, prayed to Brahmā, when he prepared to carry out his orders¹ 'When we are born on earth, may we be blessed with that supreme devotion to the Great God, the Lord of the universe, Hari, whereby one may easily prevail over all misfortunes in the world of men.' Assured that it should be as he wished, the mighty and illustrious Drona was himself born in Vraja and was known as Nanda, and Dharā was born as Yaśodā. Therefore, O son of the Bharatas, when the Lord Janārdana took the place of a son with them, that couple, of all those Gopis and Gopas, came to have the most love for Him. To make good the word of Brahmā, Krishna, the Omnipresent, lived in Vraja with Rama, enchanting them with His pranks (48-52).

CHAPTER IX

KRISHNA BRINGS DOWN THE ARJUNA TREES

Srī Suka said: One day, the maids being engaged in other tasks, Nanda's good wife Yaśodā herself churned the curd. And as she churned, she remembered, and remembering, sang, His childhood pastimes that have been chronicled here. Her ample hip covered with fine linen held by a girdle, her quivering breasts streaming with milk from love for her child, the bracelets on her arms, tired with plying the churn-rope, quivering with her ear-pendants, her face covered with perspiration, and the *mālātī* blooms slipping from her braid, the lovely woman went on with the churning. And as she was churning,

¹ To be born as the foster-parents of the Lord.

Hari came to His mother, eager to feed at the breast ; and catching hold of the churning-rod, He stopped her, filling her with delight. She suckled Him when He clambered on to her lap, her breasts streaming from love, looking the while at His face with a smile. When He was still unsatisfied, she set him down in a hurry and went out, as milk on the hob was boiling over. Angered by this, He bit His trembling rosy nether lip and broke the quern with a stone, shedding make-believe tears ; and retreating into the interior of the house, He ate the fresh butter. Taking down the boiled milk from the oven, the Gopi returned, to find the pot broken, Observing her son's handiwork, and not finding Him there, she laughed. When she discovered her son standing on an upturned mortar and feeding a monkey with as much butter as it would eat, taking it from its swing, while His eyes apprehensively flitted hither and thither from consciousness of His guilt, she quietly came up behind Him. Seeing her armed with a stick, He got down in haste from His perch and ran out as if in great fear. The Gopi sprang after Him, but did not catch Him, Whom even the mind of the yogi, fashioning itself in His image by intense concentration, cannot comprehend. Going after Him, her gait impeded by the weight of her large and heaving hips, leaving a trail of flowers thrown out of her loosened fillet by the impetuosity of her movement, she of the lovely waist, His mother, at last caught hold of Him. Grasping Him firmly by the arm, as He, having done wrong, wept aloud, rubbing His eyes with His hands and daubing the kohl in them all over His face, she threatened Him, to put fear into Him. But when she saw that He was frightened, she who loved the child threw away the stick, and—imagine !—wanted to tie Him up, not knowing the stuff He was made of (1-12).

He, for Whom there is neither within nor without, neither before nor after, Who is before the world and after it, Who is without it and within, and Who is the world itself, He, Adhokshaja, Whose truth was hidden behind His human exterior, was to the Gopi only her son ; and she tried to tie Him to a mortar, as if He were an ordinary man-child. When she tried to tie Him up

for His naughtiness, she found the cord two inches short, and so joined another cord to it. When that too fell short, she added another ; and every cord that she went on adding fell short in the same way. When she had thus used up all the cords in the house, with the Gopis looking on, smiling broadly, she too laughed, but was greatly astonished. When He saw that His mother was fatigued, her body covered with sweat, her braid loosened and the chaplet fallen down, Krishna was overcome by tenderness and allowed Himself to be bound. Even thus, my good sir, did Hari demonstrate His gracious submission to His devotees, ever free though He is, and control as He does the entire universe as well as its controllers. Neither Brahmā nor Bhava nor even Śrī, ever ensconced on His breast as she is, got that guerdon of grace from Him, the Dispenser of Liberation, that the Gopi had. The exalted Lord, the Gopi's son, is not easily won in this life by men who prize the body, or even by the enlightened, Who are Self-realized, as He is by those who love Him (13-21).

When His mother was absorbed in her household duties, Krishna, the puissant Lord, saw a pair of *arjuna* trees, which had once been the famed and prosperous Guhyakas, Nalakūbara and Maṇigrīva, sons of the Lord of Wealth, but were turned in the far past into trees by Nārada's curse because of their pride (22-23).

CHAPTER X

THE LIBERATION OF KUBERA'S SONS

The King prayed, ' Please tell me, venerable sir, why they were cursed, what was the disgraceful thing they did, which could provoke even the celestial sage to wrath ' (1).

Śrī Suka answered : Having become the attendants of Rudra, those two sons of the Lord of Wealth were puffed up with pride. With women who sang their praises, they roamed the flowering groves in the delightful woods of Kailāsa on the Mandākinī, drunk on the fermented juice of the palm, their eyes rolling in intoxication. Plunging amidst the lotus beds of the Gangā, they divested themselves with the young women,

like tusked with cow elephants. By chance the blessed one, the celestial sage Nārada saw the gods there, O scion of the Bharatas, and knew they were drunk. On seeing him, the goddesses, who were nude, were ashamed, and fearing his curse hastily donned their clothes; but not the naked Guhyakas. Seeing those sons of the god fuddled with drink, and blinded by prosperity, he uttered these words, laying a curse on them as a favour and for their lasting good (2-7).

Nārada said: 'In living the life of pleasure a man does not fall into such grievous aberrations from pride of birth or from any impulse due to *rajas*, as from the intoxication of prosperity, with which go women, dice and drink. Under its influence men knowing no self-control pitilessly inflict suffering on living creatures: they would seem to imagine that this perishable body was immune from age and death. Who would say that that man knows his own good, who injures living things, earning hell thereby, to pamper the body, which may be styled even 'god', but which must come in the end to be known as worm, ordure or ash? To whom does the body belong—to him who gives it food, or to the father, mother or mother's father, or to the strong man that impresses it, or to the man that buys it, or perchance to fire, or to the dog? Who but a fool would identify himself with this body, which is thus common property, which comes from Prakṛti and returns to it, and inflict pain on living beings? Poverty is the only eye-salve for the fool whom prosperity has blinded. The impoverished man learns to see all creatures as he sees himself. The man who has known the prick of a thorn would not wish another to feel that pain, knowing from the outward signs that all creatures are affected alike; not the man who has never been pricked. The poor man, devoid of the prop of egotism, and purged of all pride, finds himself by chance reduced to extremity; that indeed is the best possible penance for him. The sense-cravings of the pauper longing for bare food, his body thin with chronic hunger, shrivel up; and therewith the impulse to cruelty dies out. Only to the poor man do the good, who look on all with an equal eye, go of their own accord.

By associating with them, he gets rid of his hankerings, and before long he becomes pure. What use could the good, who have achieved equipoise, and who want only to attain the feet of Mukunda, have for the evil men who are puffed up with the pride of wealth, and attract other evil men? They can only ignore them. Therefore, I will destroy the pride, born of ignorance, of these two, who are fuddled with drink and blinded by the intoxication of prosperity, who run after women and have not learnt self-control. Since these sons of a Guardian of the World did not know that they were naked, being swallowed up in the darkness of ignorance and filled with foolish pride, they shall remain rooted in one spot (as trees). But they shall, by my grace, remember the past, so that they may never again behave like this. When a hundred celestial years have passed, they shall find themselves in the presence of Vāsudeva and then regain their godhood and, by my blessing, become imbued with devotion' (13-22).

Srī Suka said: Having said this, the divine sage went away to the hermitage of Nārāyana. Nalakūbara and Maṇigrīva were transformed into a pair of *arjuna* trees. To fulfil the word of the sage, foremost of the devotees of the Lord, Hari went slowly towards the spot where the *arjuna* trees stood. 'The divine sage is most dear to me, and as these are the sons of the Lord of Wealth, I shall accomplish what the great soul promised.' Saying this, Krishna entered between the joined trees, and passed through, but the mortar was caught athwart. Torn up by the roots by the energy with which the child, who had the cord round His middle, tugged at the mortar behind Him to pull it through, the trees crashed with a terrific noise, their boughs, branches and foliage waving wildly under the impact of the tremendous force of the Supreme (23-27).

Forthwith issued from the trees, as if they were the fire immanent in them emerging in human form, the twins who had found deliverance, lighting up the four quarters with their brilliance. Bowing their heads to Krishna, the Lord of all the worlds, they, their impurities fallen from them, addressed Him with folded hands: 'Krishna, O Krishna, Master of all yogic powers,

Thou art the Supreme Lord, the First Cause. Those who are well versed in the Veda look upon the universe, both gross and subtle, as Thy body. Thou alone art the sole Controller of the bodies of all creatures, of the vital airs, the ego and the sense-organs. Being Vishnu, the Waneless, the exalted and omnipotent Lord, Thou art Thyself Kāla (time); and Thou art, too, the exceedingly subtle Prakṛti, constituted by Rajas, Sattva and Tamas, and the Mahat. Thou art also the Puruṣa, Director and Witness of all the modifications in the body and its different states. Thou canst not be apprehended by the products¹ of the *guṇas* of Prakṛti, which are themselves objects of perception. And who that lives confined in a body can hope to know Thee that wert, before the *jīva* was? To Thee, the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, That art the Disposer of all destinies, and the Brahma Whose glory is veiled by the *guṇas* that derive their light from It, we make our humble salutations. Thou art Thyself without a form, but Thy incarnations are easily recognized by the unequalled prowess which they all display and which are never associated with mortal creature. Thou art now incarnate in all the fullness of Thy Power for the welfare as well as the liberation of all men, being the Dispenser of all blessings. Salutations to Thee That conferest the supreme good and assurest all felicity. Salutations to Thee, Vāsudeva, in Whom is peace; salutations to Thee, the Chief of the Yadus. Give us, servants of Thy followers, leave to depart, O Lord That art infinitely great. By the blessings of the sage, we have set eyes on Thee, O Lord. May our tongues be ever engaged in singing Thy praises, our ears in hearing Thy story, our hands in doing Thy service, our minds in the remembrance of Thy feet, our heads in prostration to the world that is Thy dwelling-place, our eyes in gazing on the good, who are embodiments of Thee' (28-38).

Srī Suka said: Thus praised by them, the exalted Lord, the Master of Gōkulam, tied to the mortar as He was, spoke to the Guhyakas with a laugh. The Lord said: 'I knew even then of your fall caused by the words of the sage, the soul of compassion, which was a

¹ The senses,

blessing in disguise to you, who were drunk with prosperity. Encounter with the good, who have achieved equanimity, especially those whose hearts are wholly devoted to Me, can no more result in bondage¹ than the sight of the sun in making men blind. Therefore, O Nalakūbara, you can go home, both of you ; remember and remain devoted to Me. The supreme love for Me, which you prayed for and which destroys *samsāra*, has already been roused in you.' Thus told, they circumambulated Him, with the mortar tied to Him, and repeatedly prostrating themselves, took leave of Him, and departed for the North (39-43).

CHAPTER XI

THE ASURA BAKA DISPATCHED

Srī Suka said : Nanda and the other Gopas, hearing the noise of falling trees, came there, O best of Kurus, fearing that it might be the crash of thunder. They saw the twin *arjuna* trees fallen on the ground, and were puzzled as to the cause, though it was there before their eyes—the child, tied by the cord and pulling at the mortar. They wondered, 'Whose work might this be ? Who could have done it ?' and they were scared to think that that astounding happening might portend some great evil. The children said : 'He there—he passed between them and tugged at the mortar, which had fallen across. We also saw two great personages.' But they did not believe them, thinking that it was not possible for a child like him to pull up two trees by the roots like that ; but there were some who were not so sure. Nanda, seeing his son tied by the cord and dragging the mortar behind Him, released Him with a smile (1-6).

Applauded by the delighted Gopis, the exalted Lord would sometimes dance, as children do, sometimes the lovely one would sing aloud, submissive like a toy. Asked by them to fetch a wooden stool, a measure, or a pair of sandals, he would, with a great show of effort, lift it on to his head, and then gaily swing his arms,

¹ S. (v.r.) : 'Bondage will be ended the moment one encounters the good'.

delighting his own people and showing, to those among the world of men who realized Who He was, how gladly He resigned Himself into the hands of His devotees. Thus the Lord brought joy to Vraja with his pretty childlike ways (7-9).

* Hearing the cry, 'Who will buy fruit?' Achyuta, Bestower of all fruits, came out in all haste with a little grain in His hand to buy fruit. The fruit-seller filled with fruit both His hands from which all the grain had trickled down; and her fruit basket was filled with gems. The lady Rohiṇī repeatedly called to Krishna, Who had gone to the river-bank after the crashing of the *arjuna* trees, and to Rama, who was engrossed in play with other children. As the children, keen on play, did not come when called, Rohiṇī sent Yaśodā, who doted on them. Her breasts streaming from her love for her son, she called aloud to Him again and again from a distance, as it was past dinner-time and He was playing with His elder brother and other children: 'Krishna, O Krishna of the lotus eyes, come, my child, and drink. You have played long enough. You are famished and tired by play, my little one. Come, Rama, son, and bring your brother with you quick; you must eat, you had your breakfast early in the morning. The master of Vraja is waiting for you to take his dinner, O Dāśārha. Come and make us glad, you are the joy of our life. You children, go home. Your body is all covered with dust, my darling, come and bathe. Today is your natal star; purifying yourself, you must gift cows to Brahmanas. Look at your friends, see how they have been tidied up by their mothers, and well adorned. You too, having bathed and eaten and adorned yourself, can go back to your play.' Thus Yaśodā, looking upon Him, the Crest and Crown of all Powers, as her son, her love overpowering her understanding, took Achyuta and Rama by the hand, O King, and leading them to the camp, did all that was auspicious for them (18-20).

Having passed through great perils in the Big Forest, the Gopa elders, Nanda and others, met to deliberate on the affairs of Vraja. And to them spoke Upananda¹,

* See Notes.

¹ The elder brother of Nanda Gopa, and his chief counsellor.

who was ripe in age and wisdom ; he was a man who could judge when and where things could be done to their advantage, and he wished to give pleasure to Rama and Krishna. ' We who wish to secure the welfare of Gokulam, should go away from here. Great perils beset us here, which might bring about the destruction of children. It was by a miracle that this child was saved from the infanticide she-demon. And it was by the Grace of Hari, without a doubt, that the cart did not fall upon him. The Asura in the guise of a whirlwind, took him far into the sky, the playground of birds¹ ; fallen on the rocks, he was protected by the great gods. If the child, passing between two trees, did not die, nor did any other child, that too was due to the protection of Achyuta. Let us leave here with the children before some calamitous misfortune overwhelms Vraja, and go elsewhere with our following. There is the forest Vṛndāvana, suitable for cattle, with its woods and its holy hills, grass and herbage, where the Gopas, Gopis and cows would enjoy themselves ; therefore we will go there this very day, if you like. Yoke the carts without delay, and let the cattle be driven in front ' (21-29).

Hearing that, the Gopas with one voice cried, ' Excellent ! Excellent ! ', and they departed, each man getting his carts ready and loading his belongings on them. Diligently getting the old people, children and women into the carts along with the goods, the cowherds moved out, bow in hand, O King, accompanied by their priests, driving their cattle before them, and lustily blowing on their horns and trumpets. The Gopis in their carts, with the brightness of saffron on their youthful breasts, clad in fine raiment, and adorned with gold necklaces, joyously sang the pastimes of Krishna. Yaśodā and Rohiṇi, seated in the same cart, with Krishna and Rama by their side, beamed with pleasure, hearing those praises. Entering Vṛndāvana, which was pleasant to live in all the year round, they made a habitation for the cow-colony there, placing the carts in a half-moon. Seeing Vṛndāvana, Govardhana, and the sands of the Yamunā, Rama and Krishna were in ecstasies, O King (30-36).

¹ (alt.) Where there is no firm foothold,

Delighting the people of Vraja thus with their children's pranks and prattle, they, at the usual age, began to tend calves. Not far from the grounds of the settlement, they grazed the calves along with the other cowherd children, equipped with many playthings. Sometimes they played the flute, sometimes shot from their slings, or played ball, kicking the ball with their feet adorned with little bells; sometimes, disguised as bulls and bellowing, they fought with others, similarly disguised. They strolled about imitating the call of the birds like other little boys (37-40).

Once when Krishna and Bala were grazing the calves on the banks of the Yamunā with their friends, an Asura came there with intent to kill them. Seeing him disguised as a calf in the midst of the herd, Hari made a sign to Baladeva and gradually edged towards him, as if He had noticed nothing. Catching him by his hind-legs and tail, and swinging him round, Achyuta flung him, dead, on the top of a wood-apple tree. The huge body fell to the ground with the wood apples that it brought down. The other children, astonished at seeing that body, praised Krishna saying, 'Well done' And the gods, delighted, showered flowers (41-44).

Those two, the chief Protectors of the worlds, having started tending calves, went from place to place grazing the calves, carrying their breakfast with them. One day, wishing to water their herds, they all went to a pool, and after watering the cattle, themselves drank. There they saw a huge creature standing like a mountain-peak that had rolled down, riven by Indra's thunderbolt, and they were terrified. It was the great Asura Baka, disguised as a crane. Pouncing at once on Krishna, the powerful creature caught Him in his sharp beak and swallowed Him. Seeing Krishna gobbled up by the huge crane, Rama and the other children became insensible, like the organs when life is fled. But the crane voided Him, the cowherd's son, the Parent of the Creator of the world, because He burned his soft palate like fire. However, when he saw Him unhurt, he sprang upon Him again in a great rage, attacking Him with his beak. Seizing the mandibles of the crane, Kamsa's friend, one

with each hand, as he sprang upon Him, the Lord Who looks after the good tore them apart as playfully as if it were a reed, before the very eyes of the children. Great was the joy of the gods, who showered on the Foe of the crane jasmine and other flowers from the Nandana garden and extolled Him, playing kettle-drums and blowing conches and singing hymns of praise; seeing which the cowherds' sons were wonder-struck. Joining Him, who had come out of the jaws of death, as the senses do when life revives, the children embraced Him and were supremely happy. Collecting the calves, they went back to Vraja, and spoke of what had happened. When they heard of it, the Gopas and Gopis were amazed. Drawn to Him by their exceeding love, they gazed on Him with thirsting eyes, as if He had come back from the other world. 'Ah, how many have sought to kill this child ! But it was they that came to grief, because they had put others in fear of their lives. None of those horrid creatures can prevail against this child. Coming to kill him, they perish like moths in the flame. How wonderful that the words of the knowers of the Veda should never prove untrue. What the venerable Garga foretold we have lived to see.' Thus happily recalling and dwelling with delight on the doings of Krishna and Rama, Nanda and the other Gopas knew not the ache of life. Thus the two spent their early boyhood in Vraja, in frolics appropriate to that age, playing hide-and-seek, building dams, making monkey jumps, and so on (45-59).

CHAPTER XII

THE KILLING OF AGHA

Sri Suka said : One day, wishing to breakfast in the woods, Hari rose early in the morning, and waking up His friends, the calf-herds, with the sweet strains of His horn, set out, driving the calves before Him. With Him gladly went thousands of children, His friends, carrying well-made slings, staves, horns and flutes, and driving before them their herds, each consisting of more than a thousand calves. Combining their own herds with Krishna's numberless calves, and grazing them, they

moved from place to place, playing children's pastimes. Though already adorned with glass beads, *gunja* berries, gems or gold, they bedecked themselves with fruits and bunches of tender shoots, flowers, peacock feathers and mineral powders. They stole each other's slings and other things, and when discovered flung them some distance away ; and the boys there caught and threw them again ; and then, laughing, they restored them to their owners. If Krishna went far into the forest, attracted by the beauty of the sylvan scene, they delighted in touching Him and saying, 'I touched him first, I did.' Some played on the flute, some blew on their horns ; some sang with the bees, others warbled with the koel. Running after the shadows of birds, walking sedately with the swans, squatting by the side of the cranes, dancing with the peacocks, pulling at the hanging tails of the monkeys and clambering up the trees after them and making faces at them ; swinging from branch to branch of the fruit trees, hopping with the frogs and getting drenched in the brooks swollen by mountain cascades, laughing at their own shadows, scolding their own echoes, even thus they, thanks to the accumulated merit of good deeds, played with Him—Who, for those who had achieved enlightenment, was verily the Brahma, their own Self, Pure Knowledge and Supreme Bliss ; for those who looked up to Him with humble devotion, the Supreme Lord, Who gave Himself wholly to them ; while for those who were in the grip of *Māyā*, He was a mere man-child. Ah ! How shall one describe the good fortune of the people of Vraja, who could always feast their eyes on Him, the dust of Whose feet is beyond the reach of even the yogis who, through many lives, have with great difficulty learnt to control their minds (1-12).

Just then there appeared before them a great Asura named Agha, who could not bear to see them playing happily—a¹ sight that the gods, drunk though they have of nectar, meditate upon in their hearts in order to attain true immortality. On seeing Krishna and the

¹(*alt.*) 'The Asura, whose vulnerable points the gods were seeking, in order to slay him and thus save themselves, though they had drunk of nectar'.

children who looked up to him, Aghāsura, the younger brother of Bakī (Pūtānā) and Baka, who had been sent by Kamsa, said to himself, 'This is the destroyer of my brother and sister. I shall avenge them by killing him with all his following. When I have offered them up as libations of water and sesamum to my dear ones, the dwellers of Vraja will be as good as dead. When life is fled, who would bother about the body? And for all men their life is in their children.' Thus resolved, the knave, taking the body of a monstrously huge python, a full *yojana* long, and massive as a big mountain, lay in their path, eager to devour them, his cave-like mouth gaping, the lower jaw flush with the earth, the upper jaw among the clouds, the corners of the mouth like caverns, the fangs like mountain peaks, the interior of the mouth dark as night, the tongue like a highway; his breath came like a piercing blast, and his eyes burned like forest fires (13-17).

Seeing him thus, and thinking that what was before them was really the opulent Vṛndāvana landscape, they whimsically likened it to the open jaw of a python. 'Ah! friends, tell us now, does not this that lies before us look exactly like a live creature, his serpent-mouth opened wide to swallow us? See how like the upper lip (of the monster) is the cloud reddish with the rays of the sun, and how like the lower, the ground below, ruddy with its shadow! These mountain caverns to the right and the left rival the corners of the mouth, and the rows of tall mountain peaks the fangs. This long and broad road resembles the tongue, and the darkness between the peaks, the interior of the mouth. Ah, see how like the breath of a snake is the burning wind from the forest fire! And the foul smell of the bodies of creatures burnt by it comes like the smell of flesh from his gorge. Now, if we enter, will he swallow us up? If he does, he will perish at His hand in a trice, like the crane.' So saying, and looking at the comely face of the foe of Baka as they spoke, they entered, laughing aloud and clapping their hands (18-20).

When He heard them thus mistakenly assuring each other from ignorance, the exalted Lord, Who is seated

in the hearts of all beings, knowing him to be a demon, told Himself, 'They take truth itself for fiction,' and He sought to prevent their entering. But before He could do that, the children along with the calves had walked into the belly of the Asura. The demon however did not gulp them down; brooding on the end of his slain kin, he was waiting for Baka's foe to enter. Seeing them, who had none else to whom they could look for succour, strayed beyond the reach of His protecting arm and helpless, just meat for the fire in the belly of death, Krishna, Who assures the safety of all creatures, was distraught with pity. Astonished by this stroke of fate, He thought intensely, 'What should I do now, to make sure of two things—that this rogue does not escape with his life, and that no harm befalls these good souls?' Then, knowing what He had to do, Hari, Who sees all, entered the open mouth (25-28).

Thereupon the gods hidden behind the clouds cried in dismay, 'Alas, alas!' while Kamsa and Agha's carrion-eating kin rejoiced. On hearing those cries, the Lord Krishna, the Waneless, grew in a trice to huge proportions inside the throat, before he could crush Him along with the other children and the calves. When the throat was thus blocked, obstructing all the passages, the eyes shot out of their sockets, and he rolled about in agony; his breath, cooped up within his huge body, swelled, and cracking his skull escaped. When life¹ had departed with the breath, the Lord Mukunda, reviving with a look the calves and His friends, who were apparently lifeless, re-emerged from the jaw, followed by them. The wonderful and mighty effulgence, which had escaped from the body of the huge snake, and lingered in the sky, waiting for the Lord to come out, and lighting up the ten directions with its splendour, entered Him, even as the gods were looking (29-33).

Greatly rejoicing, all those whose work He had done paid Him their homage, the gods offering flowers, the Apsarases dancing, the singers singing songs, the minstrels making music, the Brahmanas hymning His praises,

¹ The bio-motor forces subsidiary to the vital breath (*mukhya-prāṇa*) (S.)

and the bands of heavenly attendants shouting 'Victory to Thee !' Hearing so near his own abode this multitudinous din of merry and auspicious sounds—the wonderful hymns, the melodious music and song and cries of 'Victory !'—Aja (Brahmā) came out quickly, and beholding the Lord in His glory, marvelled. The dried-up skin of the python remained long in Vṛndāvana, a grotto for the dwellers of Vraja to play in, O King (34-36).

Having witnessed this exploit done in His fifth year by Hari, in liberating them and the snake from the jaws of death¹, the children related it with astonishment in Vraja in His sixth year (as if it had been done just then). That Agha, having been purged of his sins at His mere touch, should have been granted the similitude of His glorious form, which is beyond the dreams of the wicked, should not surprise us in the Supreme, the Creator of the highest and the lowest, Who masqueraded as a man-child by His power of Māyā. If a mere conceptual image of Him, lodged in the mind for the nonce in the act of contemplation, could bring a man to the supreme goal of the devotee of the Lord, what cannot happen when He, Whom Māyā flees, since He dwells eternally in Self-Knowledge and Bliss, has in His own person been inside one's body ? (37-39).

The Sūta said : Having heard, O Brahmanas, this marvellous episode in the life of his Protector related, he who was the gift of the Lord of the Yādavas questioned the son of Vyāsa again on that holy topic, which had gripped his heart. The King asked : 'How did what had been done at an earlier time come to be spoken of as having just happened—the children so describing in Hari's sixth year what He had done in His fifth ? Be pleased to explain that to me, O great yogi. I am very eager to know, revered sir. This was assuredly wrought by Hari's power of Māyā, it could not have been otherwise. Though we are but ordinary Kṣatriyas, we are supremely fortunate, O Guru, in that we are constantly drinking in the holy nectar of Krishna's story from your lips' (40-43).

¹ Literally in the case of the boys and the calves, metaphorically for Agha, who was freed from the bondage of *samsāra*.

The Sūta said : Thus requested, the son of Bādarāyana, was overwhelmed by the remembrance of Ananta that the question brought ; regaining his consciousness of the outer world with difficulty, he spoke slowly in answer, O you who are in the forefront of the Lord's devotees (44).

CHAPTER XIII

BRAHMĀ WITNESSES THE LORD'S GLORY

Srī Suka said : Well asked, O fortunate one, O foremost of the Bhāgavatas ; though constantly hearing the Lord's story, you make it seem ever new. It is natural to good men, who grasp the essence of things, that they find every moment something new and delightful in the story of Achyuta, though their tongues and ears and hearts are always occupied with Him, even as dissolute men do in talking about women. Listen attentively, then, O King, and I will tell you, though it is a secret ; for Gurus tell the disciples whom they love even things that are secret (1-3).

Having rescued the boys who herded calves from death in the jaw of Agha, the Lord brought them to the sandy bank of the river ; and He said, ' See how beautiful this bank is, mates, so inviting as a playground, with its soft crystal-white sands, and its many trees alive with the echoes of the cries of birds and bees on the water, drawn by the scent of the lotus pool that is fairly abloom ! Let us eat here ; it is late, and you must be famished. Let the calves drink and browse at leisure in the grass near by ' (4-6).

The children said, ' Yes ', and watering the calves and herding them in the green sward, opened their food baskets, and ate happily with the Lord. Seated round Krishna, ranged in circle within circle, all facing Him, their eyes wide with joy, the children of Vraja shone like the petals of the lotus round the pericarp. They ate their food, some off flower-petals, others off leaves, or tender shoots or fruits, some straight out of the baskets ; some, placing it on bark, others on stones. Displaying to each other the special tastiness of their own viands, they ate with the Lord, laughing and making

others laugh. Seated facing¹ them, the flute stuck in His waist-cloth, the horn and the cane tucked under His left arm, a helping of tasty curd and rice on His left palm and condiments held between the fingers, the Lord, Who is the Consumer-of-the-sacrifice, ate in their midst, frolicsome as a child, making His friends, seated round Him, laugh at His jests, while the gods in heaven looked on in wonder (7-11).

While the calf-herds, life of whose life was Achyuta, were thus eating, O son of the Bharatas, the calves wandered far into the forest, tempted by the grass. Seeing them alarmed, Krishna, dispelling their fears, told them, 'Do not stop eating, mates. I will go and bring back the calves here'. So saying, the Lord Krishna, with the morsel of food in His hand, went looking for His calves on the hills, in their caves, in the recesses overgrown with creepers, and the thickets. Seizing his opportunity, the Lotus-born, who had observed from his place in the sky and marvelled at the liberation of Aghāsura by the All-Powerful Lord, and was eager to see more of the thrilling glories of the Disposer of all destinies masquerading as a man-child, spirited away the calves and their herds, and leaving them somewhere vanished from sight, O first of the Kurus. Krishna, not finding the calves, returned, and He found that the herds were not on the sandbank; and He looked for both everywhere in the forest. Seeing neither the calves nor their herds anywhere in the interior of the forest, Krishna, Who reads all hearts, at once understood that it was the Creator's doing (12-17).

Thereupon, to gladden the hearts of their mothers and satisfy Brahmā's wish, Krishna, Maker of the worlds and their Ruler, turned Himself into both calves and herds. As if to show in concrete form the meaning of the famous saying, 'All this universe is Vishnu', the Birthless Lord put Himself forth as all of them, calves and calf-herds, with just such small bodies as theirs, and hands, feet and the rest of the same size, besides being also their staves and horns and flutes, the tender

¹ To give all His mates the full joy of His company the Lord (so the commentators assume) showed by means of His inscrutable power His full face to every one of them.

shoots they had decked themselves with, and their slings and ornamental scarves; and He assumed, too, their identical character, qualities, names, figures and years, and the forms of the games they played. Having thus assumed the form of all of them, He entered Vraja, Himself directing the whole herd, keeping in order the calves that were Himself through the calf-herds that were also Himself, and playing pastimes which were Himself too. Separating the calves of each herd from the rest and placing them all in their different byres, He in the semblance of each cowherd boy entered his home. Their mothers jumped up on hearing the notes of the flute, and every one of them, taking the Supreme Brahma for her own son, took Him in her arms, and clasping Him to her bosom, fed Him on the nectar-like, heady milk that streamed from her loving breasts (18-22).

Thus Mādhava spent the day till evening, O King, entertaining Himself, each hour bringing its own pastime; and then He delighted the mothers with His winning ways. They lovingly massaged His body and bathed Him, smeared Him with unguents, adorned Him with jewels, placed the *tilak* on His forehead, muttering charms, and fed Him. The cows quickly ran mooing to their calves, and when they came let them drink at their overflowing udders, licking them the while. The Gopis and the cows had for Him the same motherly solicitude, but with an enhanced love; and Hari showed them the same filial affection, but untouched by Māyā. The people of Vraja now loved their own children as they had always loved Krishna, with a surpassing love, the tendrils of affection growing stronger day by day the whole of that year, till that affection seemed without limits. Thus, the Lord, herding calves, had the care of Himself in the form of calves and calf-herds, and diverted Himself in the woods and the byres for a whole year (23-27).

Once, when there were but five or six days more to go, the Birthless went to the forest with Rama, grazing the calves. The cows, which were grazing on the top of the Govardhana mountain, saw from afar the calves that were grazing close by Vraja. On seeing them, the

entire herd, wholly forgetting itself in its love for them, galloped towards them, on two legs as it seemed, neck drawn to hump, tail erect and face up, along difficult tracks, disregarding their keepers, and bellowing, while milk poured from their udders all over the place. Going up to the calves at the foot of the mountain, the cows, even those that had calved again, let them drink the milk oozing from their udders, licking them the while as though they would devour them. The herdsmen came after them in an angry mood, shamefaced at their failure to stem the stampede, and exhausted with the fatigue of traversing a difficult track; and there they saw their children by the side of the calves. Deluged by the love that flooded their hearts at the sight of their children, they tenderly lifted them up in their arms, all their anger gone, and hugged them, and kissed them on the crown of the head, and were in bliss. The cowherds, men of advanced age, having won heart's ease from the embrace of their little ones, tore themselves away with great difficulty, tears springing to their eyes at the recollection (28-34).

Seeing the extraordinary affection, increasing every moment, which the cows of Vraja showed towards their calves, including those that had been weaned, and not knowing the cause of it, Rama pondered: 'What does this amazing thing mean—this unprecedented access of love for the little ones that every one in Vraja, including myself, feels—the kind of love that was once given only to Vāsudeva, the Soul of the universe? What kind of Māyā is this? Who could have caused it? Can it be the work of the gods, of men or of Asuras? But I am fairly certain that it must be the Power of My Lord. None else could take *me* in.' Pondering thus, the Dāsārha saw, with the eye of transcendental knowledge, that the calves as well as his own companions were but the Lord of Vaikuntha Himself. 'These are not the great gods, neither are they the sages. It is Thou Thyself That hast manifested Thyself in these different forms. Tell me how all these various things came to be.' Asking thus, Bala learnt from the Lord's brief telling how it had all come about (35-39).

When a whole year had passed in a fraction of a second according to his reckoning, the Self-existent came there and found Hari playing with all His followers, as He had been doing the whole year. 'All the children that there were in Gokulam, and all the calves, are sleeping on my bed of Māyā, and have not got up till this moment. Wherefrom, then, are these, who are other than those that have been spell-bound by my power of Māyā, and who are as many as they, and have been playing with Vishnu in the same place for a whole year now?' And the Self-existent, pondering long over these seemingly different entities, could not make out which were real and which were not. Seeking thus to delude Vishnu, over whom illusion has no power, but Who deludes the universe, Aja was Himself taken in by his own power of delusion. Like the dimness of mist on a dark night, or the light of the glow-worm in day-time, the petty deluding power that is employed against the Supreme only exposes the impotence of him who employs it (40-45).

At that moment, even as Aja looked, all the calves and their herds presented themselves before his eyes as so many glorious Forms divine—dark-blue as the rain-cloud, clad in yellow silks; each with four arms, and holding the conch, the mace, the discus and the lotus; wearing crowns and ear-pendants, gold chains and garlands of wild flowers; with armlets that glowed with the added lustre of the Srivatsa mark, and gem-set bracelets, three-ribbed like the conch-shell; resplendent with toe-ring and anklet, girdle and finger-ring. From head to foot they were loaded with the fragrant new garlands of the holy basil, which those who had accumulated an endless store of merit had offered. With their smiles radiant as the moonlight, and the glances from the corners of their eyes tinged with pink, they seemed to effect¹, by the quality of *sattva*, the satisfaction of the supreme desires of their own devotees, which they induced by the quality of *rajas*. There they were, each

¹ The colour of the smile (by poetic convention, white) suggesting the *sattva-guṇa*, dominant characteristic of Vishnu, the Preserver, and that of the eyes the *rajo-guṇa*, the chief factor in Brahmā's work as Creator; the smile and the glance are by poetic fancy conceived of here as rousing and fulfilling the desires of the Lord's devotees.

being worshipped by all embodied existences, animate and inanimate, from the Creator to a tuft of grass, with dance and song and many an offering. They were attended by the supernatural attributes—the power of making oneself infinitely small, and so on—by *Māyā*, *Avidyā* and other powers, and by the twenty-four (Sāṅkhyan) principles *Mahat* and the rest; and waited upon by time, nature, training, tendency, desire, past *karma*, and the three *gunas*, all in concrete shape, their will subdued to His design by the glory of the Lord. There stood those Forms of the *Brahma*, That is one and ever the same, of the nature of Truth and Knowledge, Infinitude and Bliss, Whose boundless glory is not to be apprehended even by those who see with the eye of Self-knowledge. Thus *Aja* had a momentary glimpse of them, who bodied forth the *Para Brahma*, by Whose light is manifested the universe with all things in it, animate and inanimate. Then, averting His eyes in extreme amazement, all his eleven sense-faculties dazed by their splendour, *Aja* fell silent, like the four-faced image of *Pūrdevī*¹ in the presence of the goddess (46-56). When the Consort of *Sarasvatī* was thus confounded by the vision of the Self, Which is inscrutable and unique in Its Glory, being Consciousness and Bliss, which transcends *Prakṛti*, and of Which all that may be known is only what may be learnt from the *Upanishads*’ rejection of what is ‘not-That’, the Supreme, Who knows no birth, let down again the magic² curtain of *Māyā* for him, who was left dazedly wondering, ‘What is this?’ and could not even raise his eyes to look again at that marvel. Then *Brahmā* was able to look out on the world again, like the dead risen. He opened his eyes with difficulty and saw the world as well as himself. Forthwith casting his eyes about him in all directions, he saw before him *Vṛndāvana*, with its multitude of trees by which men make a living, and extensive prospects that were uniformly pleasing; where man and beast, natural and inveterate foes, lived together like friends; and whence anger and greed and all that

¹ Said to be the Mother-goddess, tutelary deity of *Vraja*. When she shows herself, her image will naturally subside into insignificance.

² See Notes.

brood had fled, because the Invincible had taken up His abode there. And there Parameshti beheld as before the Brahma, One without a second, Limitless Being and Unplumbed Wisdom, masquerading as a child of the cowherds, as He looked everywhere for His friends and the calves, with a morsel of food in His hand (57-61).

On seeing Him he got off his mount in all haste, and throwing himself down on the ground, where his body looked like a golden rod, prostrated himself before Him, touching His feet with the crests of his four crowns and bathing them with his holy tears of joy. He threw himself down at Krishna's feet, getting up time and again only to fall down again, and he lay there long, his mind dwelling on the Glory that he had seen. Then slowly rising up and wiping his eyes, He raised them to Mukunda's face, and making a low bow, as he joined his palms in salutation, praised Him in all humility, his body trembling, his voice faltering, his mind wholly given to Him (61-64).

CHAPTER XIV

BRAHMĀ SINGS KRISHNA'S PRAISES

Brahmā said : ' I bow to Thee, O Thou to Whom all praise is due, to Thee, the son of the master-herdsman, Whose feet are tender, Whose body is like the rain-cloud and raiment like lightning, Whose face is lit up by the ear-rings of *gunja* seeds and the chaplet of spreading peacock plumes, Who wearest a garland of forest flowers and art comely with Thy distinctive marks—the morsel of food, the cane, the horn and the flute. Even of the body That Thou assumest, O Lord, which is a source of blessing to me, and which accords with the desires of Thine own people, none can truly know the greatness, because it is not made up of the gross elements ; how then could any one hope, even with the mind turned inward and stilled, to apprehend the glory of Thee as Thou truly art, the One Existent, Pure Self-Knowledge and Bliss ? Though Thou art beyond the reach of any one else in the three worlds, Thou art easily

attained by those who make no effort at gaining knowledge of the Self, but are content, remaining where they are, humbly to hear and revere, in thought, word and deed, the tale of Thy glory, proclaimed by the good, that comes to their ears. Those who, scorning devotion to Thee from Whom flows all good, subject themselves to hardships for gaining enlightenment alone, gain nothing but that suffering, Omnipresent Lord, like those who thresh coarse husk. In days past, O Achyuta That art infinitely great, there were many men in this world who, having practised yoga, dedicated all their worldly activities and *karmas* to Thee. The spirit of devotion this engendered in them, quickened by the tale of Thy Glory that they heard, was the sole cause of the knowledge of the Self that came to them ; and then they easily attained Thee, the Supreme Goal (1-5).

For those of pure minds, whose senses are withdrawn from the world of objects, it is at least possible to know Thy greatness as the Brahma, absolute and unlimited by the *guṇas*, O Thou That art the Illimitable Vast, through integral experience of the Self, Which reveals itself by Its own light in the mind free from all modes, but is never known in other ways. But who could ever hope to reckon the qualities with which Thou, the Ruler of all qualities, art incarnate here for the welfare of the universe, even if men of extraordinary abilities, given sufficient time, might possibly enumerate the atoms in the earth or the particles of snow in the sky or the scintillas of light in the heavens ? Therefore he who lives in the devout expectation of Thy grace, taking the fruits of his own past *karma* as they come and making his obeisance to Thee in thought, word and deed, has already entered on his birthright of freedom (6-8).

Look at my baseness, All-Powerful Lord, in seeking to delude Thee, the Infinite, the First Cause, the Supreme Ātman, the Deluder of all deluders, from the desire to taste my power. Who was I, utterly insignificant, to pit myself against Thee, like the spark against the fire ? Born of *rajas*, ignorant, blinded by the impenetrable darkness of pride in my Creatorship, I flattered myself that I had power in my own right ; pardon me,

O Achyuta, telling Thyself, "I am his master and must have compassion for him". What am I, with a body just seven spans long, contained in the pot which is the Cosmic Egg, and which is covered by the wrapping of Prakṛti, Mahat, the ego, *ākāśa*, air, fire, water and earth, before Thee in Thy glory, the pores of Whose skin are like casements through which millions of similar cosmoses flow in and out like atoms? (9-11).

Would the child in the womb kicking his feet give offence to his mother, O Adhokshaja? And is there anything whatever outside Thy womb, however it may be described, gross or subtle, cause or effect? There is certainly no untruth in the saying that Aja emerged from the lotus stalk that grew from the navel of Nārāyana, on the waters of the deluge from the mingling of the oceans that occurred at the dissolution of the worlds; but does that not mean, Supreme Lord, that I was born of Thee? Art Thou not Nārāyana—He who is the Soul in all beings, the Prompter of all actions, the Witness in all hearts? (12-14)

He Who is spoken of as Nārāyana, because He dwells in the *tattvas*, and lay on the waters that issued from Nara, was indeed Thine embodiment. But that He lay on the waters is not the truth, it was but Thy Māyā. If Thy body, wherein are all the worlds, lay on the waters, why did I not see it even then, O Ineffable Majesty? Why was it not shown to me then, at least within my heart, whereas, later, it was instantly revealed to me? In this very incarnation, O Dispeller of Māyā, the illusory nature of the universe was made manifest by Thy showing it to Thy mother inside Thy belly, even while it clearly lay all about her outside? The universe, and Thyself too, were seen outside exactly¹ as they appeared inside Thee; how could all this be seen in Thee unless it was all pure illusion? And was not the fact that the universe, apart from Thee, is an illusion, demonstrated by Thee to myself and, that too, this very day? First, Thou art the lone Existent; then Thou art all Thy friends in

¹ If the vision of the world inside Krishna were an image of the physical world, it would, like all reflections, be reversed; and Krishna could not have been seen in it. For *alt.* see Notes

Vraja and all the calves ; and then Thou art as many four-armed figures, worshipped by everybody including myself. Forthwith Thou didst turn into as many universes¹. And now there remains but the infinite Brahma, One without a second. Taking Thy stand on Prakṛti of Thy own free will, Thou weavest the web of illusion, that takes in those who do not know Thy true essence ; appearing as me while engaged in the act of creation, as Thyself (Vishnu) in the act of protection, and as the Three-eyed here in the act of destruction (14-19).

O Supreme and All-Powerful Lord, O Disposer of all destinies, Thou That knowest no birth dost incarnate among the gods and the *rshis*, among men and the lower creation, even among the creatures of the deep, for humbling the wicked and exalting the good. O exalted Lord That art supremely great, O Transcendent Soul, O Master-Yogi, who in the three worlds can know where, in what manner, when or how often Thou playest Thy play, displaying Thy yogic Power of Māyā ? That is how the entire universe, though unreal in essence, dreamlike, devoid of intelligence and miserable with an intense misery, comes to have a semblance of reality. By Thy Power of Māyā it appears in Thee, the Infinite, Whose form is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. Thou art the One Reality, for Thou art the Ātman, the Primordial Purusha, the Self-luminous, the Infinite, the First Cause, the Eternal, the Unwaning, the Ever-Blissful, the Stainless Pure, the Perfect One without a second, That which is free from all qualifications, the Immortal. Those who see Thee directly, the Soul in all beings, as their own soul, with the unerring eye of Upanishadic knowledge obtained by the grace of that sun, the Guru, cross the ocean of transmigratory existence, which is the product of nescience (20-24).

For those who do not know the Ātman as their own Self, the entire phenomenal universe exists by reason of that ignorance, and it disappears with the dawn of knowledge ; just as one sees a snake's body in the rope

¹ Though in verses 46 to 56 (pp. 213-14, *ante*) this is not mentioned, the commentators assume that that transformation should also have been shown to Brahmā.

in the one case and sees it no longer in the other. The much-talked of bondage to *samsāra* and liberation therefrom, which are both products of ignorance, have no existence apart from the Ātman whose nature is Truth and Consciousness. For, rightly considered, there can be neither ignorance and bondage, nor knowledge and freedom from bondage, for the Paramātmā That is eternal and absolute Consciousness, any more than there can be night and day for the sun. Taking Thee, the Ātman, for something else, and something else for the Ātman, the Ātman is sought for outside oneself: how marvellous the folly of ignorant men! Men of discrimination seek Thee, O Infinite, within the body itself, negating the unreal; without negating the unreal snake first, how could they know the rope, though it was close at hand? (25-28).

‘But, while that is so, O Lord, my God, only he who has been vouchsafed at least a modicum of grace from Thy lotus feet can know the real nature of Thy greatness; no one else, whoever he might be, and however long he might seek to know it by the most diligent inquiry. Therefore pray vouchsafe me the supreme good fortune, my Master, be it in this very birth or in any other, however humble it might be, of being one—it does not matter who—among Thy devotees, and devoting myself with all love to Thy feet, tender as new shoots. Ah! what rare good fortune was that of the cows and women-folk of Vraja, the nectar of whose breasts Thou drankest as calf or child with infinite relish, Omnipresent Lord, though all the sacrifices that have been offered Thee have not been adequate enough for Thy propitiation. Ah! how blest, with a blessing beyond compare, were those who lived in Nanda Gopa's Vraja, in having for their friend and companion the Supremely Blissful Brahma, Eternal and Perfect! (29-32).

‘How can one put in words their glorious good fortune, O Achyuta, when it is only our supreme luck that makes it possible for Sarva and the other eleven gods and myself to quaff repeatedly from our chalice, the sense-organs of those good folk, the heady honey of Thy lotus feet, sweet as nectar? That is why I pray for that

blessing above all blessings—which is, to be born as any kind of creature in this world, yea in this very cowherd settlement in the forest; for then I might receive on my head the dust from the feet of any one of them for whom Mukunda, the dust of Whose feet the Vedas are still seeking, is their whole life. Why, our minds are totally baffled, seeking to discover what guerdon, and where, even Thou, exalted Lord, couldst bestow on the dwellers of this cowherd settlement, which could be greater than Thyself, That art the sum of all fruits. For it was granted even to Pūtanā, as well as to all her kin, to attain Thee by merely pretending to goodness. But these here have dedicated to Thy service all that they have—home and wealth, their kin, the wife of their bosom, their own body, their children, their heart and life (32-35).

‘Desires are thieves, and the home a prison, and attachment fetters on the feet, only so long as men do not give themselves wholly to Thee, O Krishna. Though Thou art One and One only, O All-powerful Lord, Thou displayest Thyself as many on earth to enhance the bliss of those who have put themselves into Thy hands. Let those who think that they know Thee, think so by all means; but, as for me, O Lord—why go on endlessly?—Thy glory is beyond the reach of my mind and speech and senses alike. Give me leave to depart, O Krishna. Being all-seeing, Thou knowest all. Thou alone art the master of all the worlds, and I lay this world (my body) at Thy feet. O Sun that rejoices the heart of the lotus that is the Vṛshṇi race, O Moon of Delight that causes to swell with gladness those oceans—the earth and the gods, the Brahmanas and the cows—O Light before Whom flees the dark night of heresies, O sworn foe of the demons that trouble the earth, O Lord worthy of the adoration of the sun and all things under him, O gracious Krishna, accept my homage unto all eternity’ (36-40).

Sri Suka said: Praising thus the Lord That is supremely great, the Creator walked round Him thrice in all reverence, and prostrating himself at the feet of Him Who is dear to all beings, returned to his own abode. The Lord, taking leave of the Self-existent, brought the

calves, which were going towards the forest as before, to the sandbank where His companions were sitting as they had originally sat. Though a whole year had passed, and that, too, without the company of the Lord of their hearts, it seemed but a split second to the children, overpowered by Krishna's Māyā. What indeed is there that men bemused by Māyā will not forget, since all the world, under its spell, forgets the Ātman ever and again? And His comrades said to Krishna, 'Ah! Excellent! Here you are back with all speed. We have not eaten even a morsel yet. Come here, and eat undisturbed.' And Hṛshīkeśa, laughing, ate with the children, and showing them the skin of the python, returned from the forest to Vraja. Picturesquely bedecked with peacock plumes, flowers and fresh mineral tints, His face a feast for the Gopis' eyes, He entered the byre, calling to the calves endearingly with the jubilant notes of the loud flute and horn, while His companions sang His spotless renown. 'To-day Yaśodā's darling son killed a great serpent and saved us from it,' proclaimed the children in Vraja (41-48).

The King asked, 'How could they have such love for Krishna, Who was not their own child, as they had never felt for their own? Deign to explain, O Brahman' (49).

Sri Suka answered: Every man loves his own Self best, O King; other things, children, riches, etc., are dear only because they are loved by the Self. That is why, great King, men have for their body, which they regard as their own Self, such love as they do not feel for son or wealth or home, which are to them just possessions. To men who identify the body with the soul, O best of Kshatriyas, those whose connection with them derives through the body are not as dear as the body itself. When the body, love of which was so strong in a man even when it was worn out, comes to be looked upon by him as a mere possession,¹ it ceases to be loved with the love given to the Self. From this you will see that all creatures love their own soul more than they love

¹ That is, when he comes to realize that it must perish, he ceases to identify it with himself, and then he no longer gives it the love he gives to the Self. For *alt.* see Notes.

anything else, and it is for its sake that the entire world of animate and inanimate things is dear to them. You must know, O King, that this Krishna is none other than the Soul in all beings; it is for the good of the world that He shows Himself by His power of Māyā as one possessed of a body. To those who know Krishna as He truly is, all things that exist, animate and inanimate, are but the manifestations of the Lord; there is no other reality. All things exist essentially in the cause of their origin; and the Lord Krishna is the root-cause of all causes. What then can there be that is not He, tell me. For those who entrust themselves, as to a boat, to the foot, tender as a new shoot, and the refuge of the saintly, of Murāri, Whose fame is holy, the ocean of transmigratory existence is no more than a calf's-hoof puddle. And they attain the Supreme Abode. Never more for them the experience of those things that bring disaster (50-58).

I have now answered your question, 'How did something that Hari had done in His childhood come to be related in His early youth?' He who hears recounted, or himself extols the doings of Murāri and His playmates, the destruction of Agha and the bivouac on the green sward, the manifestation of the play of Pure Consciousness, and the Creator's great hymn, will achieve all the ends of life. Thus they spent their childhood in Vraja in children's pastimes, such as hide-and-seek, building dams, making monkey-leaps, and so on (59-61).

CHAPTER XV.

BALARĀMA SLAYS DHENUKA

Sri Suka said : Having reached the age of adolescence, the two were regarded in Vraja as equal to the task of herding cows. With their companions, they grazed their cows, making all Vrindāvana holy. And Mādhava, intent on diversion, entered the woods, which were in full flower, and where there was good grazing, playing on the flute and driving the cows before Him. He was accompanied by Bala, and followed by the cowherds, who sang His praises. The sight of that wood, filled with the delightful sounds of birds, bees and deer, and served by the breeze carrying the scent of the lotus from

the lake, whose waters were lucid as good men's minds, put the Lord in a mood to enjoy Himself. Rejoicing to see everywhere the big forest trees, with their wealth of shoots of a reddish brown, touching His feet with the tops of their branches, heavily laden with fruits and flowers, the Primordial Lord spoke to His elder brother with a smile (1-4).

The Lord said: 'How wonderful, my Lord, that these should bow their heads to Thy lotus feet, worshipped by the greatest of the gods, bringing with their branches their offerings of fruits and flowers, for the dissipation of their nescience, the cause of their birth as trees! These bees, O Primordial Lord, singing Thy glory, which purifies all the worlds, follow Thee lovingly at every step; they must be the sages, foremost among Thy devotees, who would not be separated from Thee, the Lord of their hearts, even though Thou livest in the forest, the truth of Thee hidden from mortal eyes, O flawless One. The peacocks dance for Thee with joy, the deer gladden Thee with their looks, even as the Gopis do, and the flocks of koel raise their voice in songs of praise to welcome Thee That hast come to their home; blest indeed are these forest creatures. But such is ever the way of the good. Fortunate is the earth this day, and the grass and herbage that touch Thy feet, and the trees and vines brushed by Thy fingernails, and the streams and the mountains, the birds and the beasts on whom Thine eyes rest kindly; and fortunate, too, the Gopis that have known the touch of Thy breast, for which the Goddess Sṛī herself yearns' (5-8).

Sṛī Suka said: Thus Krishna, delighting in the opulence of Vṛndāvana, diverted Himself, as He grazed the cows with His friends on the river banks by the hillside. Crowned with a wreath, and with Sankarṣaṇa by His side, He would sometimes sing with the drunken bees as they sang, while His devoted friends sang His praises. Sometimes He would cry with the swans, or strut before the strutting peacocks, making His companions merry. Now and then He would affectionately call by their names the cows that had gone far, in a voice deep as thunder and falling gratefully on the ear of cow

and keeper alike. He would imitate the calls of the partridge, the curlew, the ruddy goose, the skylark, and the peahen ; or pretend fear of exceedingly strong creatures like lions and tigers when in the midst of the lesser beasts. Sometimes, when His elder brother, tired from play, lay down making a pillow of a cowherd's lap, He would help Him to relax by massaging His feet. When the herdsmen were dancing or singing, leaping or fighting with each other, the two would take them by the hand and laughingly applaud them. Tired from His wrestling bouts, He (Krishna) would sometimes lie down at the foot of a tree, on a bed of tender shoots, resting His head on a herdsman's lap. Then some of them would chafe the feet of the great-souled One, while others, whose sins had surely been destroyed, fanned Him. Yet others, their hearts melting with love for Him, would sing in slow strains lovely songs that worthily described His glory, great King. Screening thus the truth of Himself from other eyes by His power of Māyā, and living the life of the cowherd's son, He, Whose flower-soft feet are lovingly tended by the Goddess Rāmā, diverted Himself like a rustic among rustics, though in some of His acts He showed Himself as the Almighty (9-19).

The cowherd Sridāmā, bosom friend of Rama and Keśava, and Subala, Stokakrishna¹ and others, spoke to them with the indulgence of love, saying, 'Rama, O Rama of the great arms, O Krishna, Destroyer of the wicked, there is, not far from here, a great grove full of rows of palm trees loaded with bunches of fruit. Lots of fruit fall down, and there they lie untouched because of the wicked Dhenuka. He is, O Rama and Krishna, an Asura who disguises himself as an ass ; he possesses overweening strength, and is attended by many others, his kin, all as strong as himself. The place is avoided by men who are terrified of the cannibal, as well as by cows and birds, and the fragrant fruits have been tasted by no mortal, O destroyer of the foe. It is their pleasant smell that is all about us. Get us the fruits, Krishna, the odour is so tempting ; let us go there, if you please, Rama, we long for them.' Hearing those words of

¹ This may stand for two different names, Stoka and Krishna.

their friends, and wishing to do their pleasure, the mighty brothers laughed, and went with the cowherds to the palm grove (20-27).

Bala went in, and shaking the palm trees like an elephant with His powerful hands, brought down the fruits. Hearing the noise of the falling fruit, the Asura in the guise of an ass came there at a gallop, shaking the earth with his tread. Rushing at Bala, the powerful and vicious creature kicked him on the chest with his hind legs, and careered about him in a circle braying aloud. Coming up again, and stationing himself before Him, with his back turned to Him, he struck out at Him with his hind legs in a tumult of fury. Seizing him by the forefeet with one hand and whirling him round and round, he (Bala) threw him, already dead from the swinging, at the top of a palm. Hit by the body, the great palm with its big top swayed wildly and broke in two, rocking the next tree; and that shook the next, and that the next, and so on. Under the impact of the tree felled by the ass's carcass, which Bala had playfully tossed on it, all the trees reeled as if shaken by a great wind. This exploit of the Lord Ananta, Who sustains the universe, should be no matter for surprise, my good sir, as it is on Him that the universe is extended like the cloth on the warp and the woof. Thereupon all the asses, Dhenuka's kin, attacked Krishna and Rama, mad at the killing of their relative. Krishna and Rama caught them by the hind legs as they came and playfully sent them hurtling through the palms. The ground, crowded with heaps of fruit, Asura corpses and palm tops, looked like the sky covered with clouds. Witnessing that tremendous exploit of theirs, the gods and others showered flowers on them, made music and uttered paeans of praise. Thereafter, all men ate the palm fruits without fear, and the cows grazed in the slain Dhenuka's forest (28-40).

Krishna, with the eyes like lotus petals, to hear or tell of Whom purifies, returned to Vraja with His elder brother, and the cowherds, His companions, who sang His praises. The Gopis went forth in a body, with yearning eyes, to meet Him, as He, with his winsome look and charming smile, the peacock plumes and wild

flowers stuck in His hair, streaked with the dust of cows' hooves, came playing the flute, His friends accompanying Him and extolling His exploits. As their eyes, like bees, drank in the honey from the lotus face of Mukunda, the women of Vraja shed the pangs of separation they had suffered during the day. Receiving their propitiatory offering of modest glances and bashful smiles, He entered the byre. Yaśodā and Rohiṇī, their doting mothers, gave them, according to the time of day, whatever they specially liked. Refreshed after the fatigues of the way by a bath and massage, they put on nice clothes. Adorned with divinely beautiful wreaths and perfumes, they ate the sweet food served by their mothers, and petted by them, they lay down on their soft beds in Vraja and slept (41-48).

Grazing the cows in Vṛndāvana, the Lord Krishna once went to the Yamunā with his friends but without Balarāma. The cows and cowherds, oppressed by the summer sun and tormented by thirst, drank of the water fouled by poison. Confounded by fate, they drank and fell down lifeless at the waterside, O foremost of the Kurus. Seeing what had happened, Krishna, Lord of the master-yogis, revived them, who looked up to Him as their protector, with His nectar-showering look. Fully restored to their senses, they got up from the waterside and looked at each other in great amazement. They understood that they owed their restoration to life after death from drinking poison, to the gracious glance of Govinda, O King (47-52).

CHAPTER XVI

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE SERPENT KĀLIYA

Srī Suka said : Krishna, Omnipresent Lord, seeing the Kṛṣṇā (Yamunā) fouled by the black cobra, expelled the serpent, to cleanse the river (1).

The King asked : ' How did the Lord vanquish the serpent that lived in the unplumbed depths of the river ? And how did he come to live there for so many cosmic cycles ? Tell us, O Brahman. How can one feel he has had enough, when he quaffs the nectar that is the

tale of the mighty deeds done as a cowherd by the All-pervading Lord, Who acts of His own free will ?' (2-3).

Srī Suka said : In the Kālindī was a pool occupied by Kāliya. Into its water, ever boiling with his fiery poison, fell the birds that flew over it ; while all creatures on its banks, moving or standing still, brushed by the wind that carried a particle of water from its poisoned waves, died. Seeing the river thus fouled by him, whose power lay in the virulence of his swift-acting poison, Krishna, Who was incarnate to put down the wicked, climbed up a tall *kadamba* tree, and plunged into the poisoned water, tightening His belt and slapping His shoulders as He did so. The serpent's pool, its waters swollen by the poison of the serpents, agitated by the force of the jump of the Supreme Lord, overflowed the banks all around to a distance of a hundred bow-lengths, its fearful billows coloured a dirty red with the poison. That was nothing for Him of the limitless strength (4-7).

Hearing the noise of the water threshed by His long arms, as He, powerful as a mighty tusker, diverted Himself in the pool, and seeing his home invaded, the serpent was provoked beyond bearing, and came out. As He, so comely with His delicately formed limbs, with the sheen of the rain-cloud on them, and with His handsome smiling face, and feet soft as the inside of the lotus, was diverting Himself fearlessly, His yellow raiment flapping against the Srīvatsa mark, he angrily bit Him in the vital parts and coiled himself round Him. Seeing Him wrapped in the coils of the serpent, and to all appearance motionless, the cowherds, His loving companions, who had dedicated to the service of Krishna their own selves, their intimates and possessions, their family and all that they held dear, were in agony; they fell down senseless, their minds overwhelmed by grief, regret and fear. The cows, bulls and heifers stood lowing in great distress, their frightened eyes riveted on Krishna's face, as though they were shedding tears (8-11).

In Vraja were seen at that time frightening portents of all the three kinds, on earth, in the sky, and in the human body, betokening imminent peril. Seeing them, the Gopas, Nanda and others, trembled with fear,

When they discovered that Krishna had gone out to graze the cows without Rama, they, not knowing His true greatness, feared, from those evil portents, that He must have met with His end. And all of them, including children, old men and women, to whom He was their very life, who could think of nothing but Him, and who were like cattle in their dumb affection, were distraught with grief and sadness and fear, my good sir; and they set out from Gokulam in a body, yearning for a sight of Krishna (12-17).

Seeing them crazy with fear, the Lord Bala, scion of the Madhus, laughed but said nothing; He knew the prowess of His younger brother. Looking for their darling Krishna, they followed the track indicated by the Lord's footprints and reached the Yamunā bank. Seeing here and there, amidst the foot-prints of others on the track followed by the cows, the footprints of the Lord, with their distinctive marks—the lotus and the barley-corn, the thunderbolt, the goad and the flag-staff—they hurried along, my friend. When from afar they espied Krishna in the pool, motionless, with the snake's body twined round Him, and the distracted Gopas at the water's edge, and the cows around them lowing piteously, they were in an agony of despair. The Gopis, with their passionate love for the Infinite Lord, burned with grief to see their darling in the serpent's coils; as they recalled His affection, his smiles, looks and words, it seemed to them that without the loved One, the three worlds would be empty. Supporting with their arms Krishna's mother, who seemed to have lost herself in her son, they, who suffered as much as she did, spoke of the darling of Vraja, their tears falling fast; not for a moment taking their eyes off Krishna's face, there they stood, looking more dead than alive. When Nanda and others, to whom Krishna was as the breath of their life, prepared to enter the pool, the Lord Rama, who knew Krishna's greatness, dissuaded them (18-22).

Seeing Gokulam left with no hope but in Himself, and all of them, including women and children, plunged in grief on account of Him, He, Who conducted Himself after the manner of men, freed Himself, after remaining

motionless for a while, from the coils of the serpent, and rose up. The serpent, racked beyond endurance by His rapidly swelling body, had let Him go. Raising his hoods and hissing fiercely, the angry snake remained staring at Hari with eyes like fire-pans ; there was poison in his nostrils, and his faces were like firebrands. He played round him, as is the wont of the king of birds ; and the serpent too spun round and round, licking the corners of his mouths with his forked tongues, his eyes blazing with the fierce fire of poison, as he watched for his opportunity. When his strength was exhausted by this incessant whirling, He, the First Cause, stepped on his massive heads, forcing down his upraised hoods ; and the First Teacher of all the arts then began to dance. Seeing that, His attendants, the Gandharvas, the Siddhas, the Chāraṇas, the gods and the goddesses were delighted, and they waited upon Him forthwith, playing the *mṛdanga*, the *paṇava*, the kettle-drum and other musical instruments, singing songs, making flower offerings, and chanting hymns of praise (23-27).

As he, with his hundred principal heads, continued turning round and round though exhausted, the Lord, Who was dealing out dread punishment, pounded with His foot-beats that head which would not bow down ; and the serpent, vomiting blood through his mouth and nostrils, was in the depths of despair. Every time he raised a head, raining poison from his eyes and hissing loudly in his wrath, He forced it down again with His foot-beats as He danced ; and thus the Ancient of Days disciplined him, Himself remaining as serene as though He were being worshipped with flowers. With his spread hoods a mass of sores from that marvellous dance, his mouths vomiting enormous quantities of blood, his limbs broken, he remembered, O King, the Author of all beings, sentient and non-sentient, Nārāyaṇa, the Primordial Lord, and in his mind commended himself to His mercy (28-30).

Seeing the serpent sunk under the stupendous weight of Krishna, Who contains within Himself all the worlds, and his umbrella-like hoods mauled by the severe battering of His soles, his agonised wives approached Him, the First Cause, their clothes and jewels and the fillets

on their hair in disarray. In their extreme distress, the good women, taking their children with them, threw themselves down on the ground before Him, Who is the Protector of all creatures; anxious to secure the release of their husband, sinner though he was, they, with joined palms, besought the mercy of Him Who is the Haven of Refuge. The wives of the serpent said: 'Without a doubt the punishment meted out to him is just, since he has sinned. Thy descent into this world is for putting down the evil-doer. Looking with an equal eye on son and foe alike, Thou punishest the wrong-doer only for his good. It is in fact a blessing that Thou hast conferred on us; for punishment by Thee absolves the wicked of sin. Since his serpenthood is itself due to sin, Thy wrath must be regarded as a benediction. One cannot but wonder what great austerities he had practised, discarding pride and according respect to all creatures, or what acts of charity he had done, moved by kindness towards all men, that Thou That animatest all creatures, shouldst have thus shown Thyself pleased with him. We know not, O Lord, by virtue of what great merit he has won the right to wear on his head the dust of Thy feet, yearning for which the Goddess of Grace, peerless among women, practised austerities for endless years, staunch in Her vows, abjuring all desires. Those that have gained that dust care not for heaven or for empire over earth, for Brahmā's supremacy or for dominion over the nether worlds, for the power won by yoga or for liberation from birth and death. That dust, so difficult to gain, which confers directly all opulence on the man who, caught in the whirlpool of *samsāra*, yearns for it, has now been won by this king of serpents, born in darkness, and a slave to his temper (31-38).

'Salutations to Thee of the endless glorious attributes, exalted Lord That art Indwelling Spirit and infinitely great, That art the Abode of the elements, That existedst before them and art their Cause, Thyself beyond all cause. Salutations to Thee That art the Repository of all Consciousness and of the power of intelligence, the Brahma, unqualified, immutable, of limitless puissance, and the Activator of Prakṛti. Saluta-

tions to Thee That art Time, and art, too, the Wielder of that power and the Witness of its operations in its different phases; to Thee that standest forth as the universe, and its Witness, its Creator and also the agents that bring about its creation, being Thyself the gross and the subtle elements, the senses, the vital airs, the mind, the intellect and the will. Salutations to Thee That veilest with the three-fold ego the Self-knowledge of the finite selves that are but Thy fractions. Salutations to Thee That art Thyself infinite and subtle, immutable and omniscient; That lendest Thyself to the most diverse speculations about Thy nature; That art the Source alike of the power of the thing signified and the word that signifies it. Salutations to Thee from Whom all the means of cognition derive their power; That art Thyself the fountain-head of all wisdom, the Origin of the Veda, the Rule, the Prohibition, and the Veda itself. We bow to Thee, Krishna, That hast taken the forms of Rama, Vāsudeva, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha, and art the Protector of Thy devotees. We bow to Thee That quickenest the inner organs; That veilest Thyself in them, and art apprehended variously from the modes of operation of those faculties; That mayest be known only indirectly from those operations; That art the Witness thereof and Pure Self-Consciousness. We bow to Thee, O Ruler of the senses, Whose greatness baffles the understanding but Whose hand is seen in the creation and manifestation of the whole world of effects; we salute Thee, the supreme Contemplative delighting in the Self, Blissfulness being Thy nature. We make our obeisance to Thee That art aware of the end of all entities, gross and subtle, That art the Controller and Director of all; That art the ground of the appearance of the universe, and That alone remainest when it has been negated; That art but the Witness of that appearance and that negation; That art the Cause of the super-imposition of the universe through nescience, and its negation through the dawn of right knowledge (38-48).

Thou Thyself, O Lord, knowest no activity; but armed with time, Thy power, which is without beginning, Thou causest, by means of the *gunas*, the emergence,

maintenance and dissolution of the universe ; and kindling by a purposeful look the innate tendencies in every creature, Thou playest Thy endless play. The creatures inhabiting the three worlds, gentle, ungentle, and stupid, are all Thy play things. But now that Thou art embarked on the task of safeguarding the Dharma of the good, and art resolved to protect them, all gentle beings are especially dear to Thee. But the ruler should overlook the first offence of a subject. Be pleased, O Thou That art the very embodiment of peace, to excuse the offence of this foolish one who did not know Thee. Have pity on him, O Lord, else the serpent pays forfeit with his life. Restore to us women, whose fate the good must bewail, our husband who is our very life. Lay down Thy injunctions for us, Thy slaves; by our scrupulous obedience to which every one shall be freed from fear' (49-53).

Sri Suka said : Thus praised by the wives of the serpent, the Lord released him, who had swooned, his heads broken by the pounding of His feet. Regaining the use of his faculties, and a little strength, and speaking slowly, as he heaved great sighs from pain, Kāliya, cowed and humble, addressed with folded hands Krishna, Who was none other than Hari. 'We are born wicked, ignorant and rancorous. And it is hard to get rid of one's natural disposition, O Lord, because of its tenacious hold on one. Thou hast made, by means of the *guṇas*, O Creator, this universe with its infinite diversity and multifarious dispositions, every creature being unique in its nature, strength, energy, heredity, mind and size. Among these, O Lord, we serpents are of a congenitally vicious temper ; how can we, deluded creatures, free ourselves by our own efforts from the power of Thy Māyā, which it is so hard to overcome ? As only Thou canst effect that for us, being the Omniscient and Supreme Lord of the universe, vouchsafe us Thy mercy or deal out punishment, just as Thou wilt' (54-59).

Sri Suka said : On hearing those words, the exalted Lord, Who had come as man on purpose, told him, 'You must not stay here, serpent ; go away to the sea without delay, taking with you your kin, children and wives ; let cows and men drink of the river. The man

who recollects and recites, morning and evening, this, My injunction to you, should have no cause to fear any of your kind. He who bathes in this pool, wherein I have sported, and worships the gods and the rest with water offerings, and fasts and meditates on Me and worships Me, shall be freed from all sins. Suparṇa, from fear of whom you left the island of Ramanāka and came to this pool, will not devour you, since you will bear my footprints.' (60-63).

Sri Suka said : Thus told by the Lord Krishna of the marvellous deeds, he rejoiced ; and he worshipped Him, so did his wives with great fervour. He felt extremely happy, having propitiated the Lord of the universe, Him of the Garuda flag, with worship in which he made offerings of raiment of an unearthly beauty and wreaths and gems and jewels of great price, rare perfumes and unguents, and a huge garland of lilies. Given leave by Him to depart, he circumbulated Him and prostrated himself before Him, and then went with his wives, friends and sons, to the island in the ocean. The nectar-like water of the Yamunā was forthwith free from poison, by the grace of the Lord Who had assumed a human form in play (64-67).

CHAPTER XVII

HOW KĀLIYA HAD COME TO THE YAMUNĀ

The King asked : ' Why had Kāliya abandoned Ramanāka, the home of the snakes ? What offence had he alone committed against Suparṇa ?' (1).

Sri Suka answered : Every other serpent¹ had been regularly paying his share of the tribute which the serpent folk had been paying to the mighty Suparṇa (to secure immunity from attack by him), leaving it at the foot of a tree every month at the full moon. But Kāliya, the son of Kadrū, arrogant in the knowledge of the virulence of his poison, despised Garuda and himself consumed the offerings. When he heard of that, the powerful one, who is dear to the Lord, was angry, and he swooped down on him, resolved to kill. Seeing

¹ The translation follows V. and V.C. For *alt.* see Notes.

him coming swiftly, he, with poison for his weapon, went forth to meet him, holding his many hoods erect. He of the dreadful tongues, who fought with his fangs, bit Suparna, his burning eyes popping out as he did so. Repulsing him, the angry son of Tārکشya, the mount of Madhusūdāna, formidable in his valour, struck with terrific speed at Kadrū's son with his right wing that blazed like gold. Battered by the wing of Suparna, Kāliya was in dire distress ; and he entered the pool in the Yamunā, which was barred to him (Garuda) and perilously deep. Once Garuda, being hungry, had carried off from the pool a fish, food which he particularly relished, disregarding Saubhari's warning. Seeing the other fish anguished and helpless at the killing of their lord, Saubhari was moved to pity ; to ensure the safety of the creatures that lived there, he declared, ' If ever Garuda comes here and devours the fish, he shall instantly forfeit his life, I tell you verily '. Kāliya alone knew this, no other serpent. Fearing Garuda, he lived there ; and he was expelled by Krishna (2-12).

When they saw Krishna come out of the pool, adorned with celestial wreaths, perfumes and raiment, and covered with gems and gold, the cowherds started up, like the senses when life returns. Loving Him as they did, they were supremely happy. Re-united with Krishna, Rohiṇī, Nanda, the Gopas and the Gopis revived, O son of the Kurus ; their dearest wish was fulfilled. Rama, Who knew His greatness, embraced Achyuta and laughed aloud ; the cows, bulls and calves, and even the trees were in bliss. The Brahmanas, Nanda's preceptors, came to him with their wives and said, ' Heaven be praised, your son, having fallen into the clutches of Kāliya, has escaped. Give gifts to the twice-born in thanks.' And Nanda in his gladness ordered cows and gold to be given as gifts, O King. And Yaśodā, the fortunate and chaste, having got back the son whom she had given up for lost, embraced Him, and taking Him on her lap shed tears (13-19).

The people of Vraja and the cows, worn out with hunger, thirst and fatigue, spent the night, great King, there on the Yamunā bank. At dead of night, when all Vraja was asleep, there broke out a forest fire, kindled

by the summer heat. Converging upon them, it might have burnt them up. Scorched by the heat, the people of Vraja woke up, and in their consternation they threw themselves on the mercy of Krishna, the Supreme Lord masquerading as man. 'Krishna, O Krishna, Blessed One, O Rama of the limitless puissance, do you not see this terrible forest fire gaining upon your own people? Save us, your bosom friends, O Lord, from this death-dealing fire, from which we see no way of escape. We cannot tear ourselves away from your feet, where one is free from all fear.' Seeing His own people in such distress, the Supreme and Infinite Lord of the endless power drank up the dread fire (20-25).

CHAPTER XVIII

BALARĀMA SLAYS PRALAMBA

Srī Suka said : Then Krishna, with His happy kin about Him, singing His praises, returned to Vraja, which was attractive with its herds of cows. As the brothers, masquerading as cowherds by their own power of Māyā, enjoyed themselves in Vraja, summer set in, the season that commends itself to no creature. But in Vṛndāvana, where the Lord Keśava lived with Rama, summer seemed like spring, because of the delights of the place. The thunder of its waterfalls drowned the harsh chirping of crickets ; and in its pleasant groves the trees were always wet with the cool drops of spray from the cascades. The forest-dwellers had not to face the heat of the summer sun or the forest fires in that region with its rich green sward, thanks to the breeze that blew over the water, rippling river, lake and running stream, and bringing with it the scented pollen of *kalhāra*, lotus and lily. There the poisonous rays of the blazing sun were powerless to parch the green grass or dry up the sandy beach and the miry earth washed by the tides that lave the banks of rivers of plumbless depth (1-6).

Into the opulent forest in flower, with its beautiful birds and beasts whose cries—the screaming of peacocks, the humming of bees, the warbling of koels and the cries of *sāras* cranes—fell pleasantly on the ear, the Lord, Who loved to sport in it, went playing the flute, with

Bala and the cowherds and their herds of cows. Decking themselves with tender shoots, peacock plumes, bunches of flowers, wreaths and mineral tints, Rama, Krishna and the cowherds danced, fought and sang. When Krishna danced, some sang, others played on the flute or blew with their hands, or with leaves and horns, while yet others praised Him. Thus the gods appearing as cowherds, their true nature hidden by their birth in that community, applauded Rama and Krishna, like actors praising the performance of one of their own number, O King. Sometimes the two, adorned with lovelocks, would indulge in bouts of wrestling, clasping hands and whirling round and round, leaping, throwing, slapping their arms and dragging the adversary about. Sometimes, while others danced, they sang and played, O King, and praised the dancers saying, 'Well done ! Excellent !' Playing the old popular pastimes with *bel* or *kumbha* fruit, or *āmla* clasped in their fists, or 'Come-and-touch-me', or hide-and-seek; imitating birds and beasts; playing leap-frog; indulging in drollery, swinging on swings, playing at kings—the two roamed the forest by the streams and the vales, by the harbours, woods and lakes (7-16).

When Rama and Krishna were thus grazing the cows along with the other herdsmen, the Asura Pralamba came there, in the guise of a cowherd, planning to carry them off. The Dāsārha, the Lord Who sees everything, allowed him to join them, though He knew who he was, and considered how best to slay him. Krishna Who was clever at devising new pastimes, called the cowherds and said to them, 'O Gopas, we shall now play, forming ourselves into two equal sides.' The cowherds named Rama and Krishna as leaders in this game; some were on Krishna's side, others on Rama's. They played many games in which one figured as rider and another as mount, the vanquished having to carry the victor. Thus carrying and being carried, they with Krishna at their head reached the banyan tree known as Bhāndeeraka, grazing the cows. When Sṛidāmā, Vṛshabha and others on Rama's side won, they were carried by Krishna and His followers, O King. The Lord Krishna, having lost, carried Sṛidāmā; and Vṛshabha, Bhādrasena. Pra-

lamba, the great Asura, carried the son of Rohinī; and deciding that Krishna would be too formidable a foe to face, swiftly took him (Rama) much farther than where he should have set Him down. As he carried Him, who was heavy as a mountain, the powerful Asura found the speed of his movement checked; so he assumed his own form. Adorned with gold ornaments as he was, he looked like a cloud lit up by lightning, carrying the moon. On seeing him, with his burning eyes and knitted brows, his fierce tusks and flaming mane, and the wonderful brilliance of his rings and crown and ear-pendants, flying with dizzy speed in the sky, the Bearer of the Plough was somewhat shaken. Then Bala recollected Himself, and as His foe was bearing Him away like a prize along the sky, wrathfully knocked him on the head with His fist with all the force of a thunder-clap, like the Lord of the gods striking a mountain. His head shattered by the blow, the Asura vomited blood and lost consciousness, and letting off a mighty yell, died and fell like a mountain struck by Indra's weapon. When they saw Pralamba slain by Bala, the mighty, the Gopas were astonished, and they shouted, 'Well done! Well done indeed!' Overpowered by their love for Him, they embraced Him as though He had returned from the dead; and calling blessings on Him, they praised Him, who deserved all praise. When the wicked Pralamba had been killed, the gods, greatly relieved, showered flowers on Bala and applauded Him saying, 'Well done! Excellent!' (17-32).

CHAPTER XIX

THE HERDS SAVED FROM THE FOREST FIRE

Sri Suka went on with his tale: When the cowherds were absorbed in their play, the cows, left to themselves, had wandered far and got into a dense thicket, tempted by the grass. Going on from jungle to jungle, the goats, cows and she-buffaloes had entered a tangle of tall reeds bleating and lowing, their throats parched by the heat of the forest fire. Not seeing the cows anywhere, the remorseful cowherds, Krishna, Rama and others, searched for them but could not find them. Distracted by

the loss of their livelihood, they came upon the track of the cows, marked by grass which they had trodden down or bitten, and by their hoof-prints. Recovering their strayed animals from the jungle of reeds where they were lowing, they, thirsty and tired, turned them back. Called by the Lord in a voice of thunder, the cows lowed in answer, delighted to hear the sound of their names (1-6).

Just then, there broke out all about them by chance the forest fire which is death to all creatures that live there; fanned by the wind, it became a mighty conflagration, licking with fierce tongues of flame all things animate and in-animate. Seeing it rapidly gaining upon them on all sides, the cowherds and the cows were terrified; and they sought refuge with Rama and Krishna, as men distraught by fear of death seek refuge with Hari. The cowherds said, 'Krishna, O Krishna, Valiant One, O Rama of the limitless prowess, we are being scorched by the forest fire; we put ourselves into your hands, you must save us. Your kin, Krishna, should be spared this suffering. You know all Dharma and we look to you for protection and put our trust wholly in you' (7-10).

Sri Suka said: The exalted Lord Hari, hearing those pitiful words of His own people, told them, 'Close your eyes, have no fears.' As soon as they did so, the Lord, Master of all *yogic* powers, swallowed up that dread fire and saved them in their strait. Opening their eyes, they were amazed to find themselves and their cows freed from their peril and brought back to the Bhāndeera tree. When they saw that *yogic* power of Krishna, manifested by His Yoga-māyā, and their own rescue from the forest fire, they decided that He must be a god. Turning the cows homeward at sunset, Janārdana entered the byres with Rama, playing on the flute, while the cowherds sang His praises. On seeing Govinda, without Whom a second had seemed an eternity to them, the Gopis were filled with the rapture of bliss (11-16).

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CHAPTER XX
THE RAINS AND AUTUMN

Sri Suka went on : The cowherds told the women of that wonderful exploit of the two in rescuing them from the forest fire, and of the slaying of Pralamba. The Gopa elders and the womenfolk were amazed at what they heard, and they thought that Krishna and Rama must be two great gods who were come to Vraja. Then set in the rainy season to which all things living owe their sustenance ; when haloes are seen in the sky, and the air is filled with thunder. The sky, with the luminaries hidden by thick black clouds accompanied by thunder and lightning, seemed like the Brahma veiled by the *gunas*. The sun who, for eight months, had sucked with his rays the earth's wealth of water, began restoring it at the appointed time. Like men moved by compassion, the great clouds, shaken by high winds, and lighting up the darkness with their lightning flashes, yielded the water that sustains and gladdens the world. The earth that had been dried up by the heat of summer burgeoned, when drenched with the showers that the god sent, like the body of the man who, having practised austerities, moved by desire, reaps the fruits thereof. In the darkness of the early night it was the fireflies that shone, not the planets ; just as in the Kali age with its burden of sin, it is the teachings of the heretics that dazzle men's minds, not the Vedas. Hearing the voice of thunder, the frogs that had lain silent, raised their chorus, like Brahmanas reciting the Vedas when the enjoined daily rites have been done. Rivulets were overflowing their banks ; they would dry up gradually, like the strength, substance and prosperity of the man who knows no self-control. The earth, dark with young grass, red with *indragopas* and shaded here and there by sprouting mushrooms, recalled the panoply of kings. The fields gladdened the heart of the husbandman with their abundant crops ; sometimes they brought affliction, too, to men of wealth, who did not understand that all depends on Providence. Enjoying the first freshets, all things on land and water were comely, like men who devote themselves to the service of Hari. The sea, where the streams joined it, was agitated by waves

whipped up by strong winds, like the will of the unperfected yogi by instinctive desires when he gives himself up to the pleasures of the senses. The mountains were imperturbable under the assault of torrential rains, as are men whose minds are given to Adhokshaja, however much afflicted by misfortunes (3-15).

The untrodden tracks, overgrown with grass, were hardly to be seen, even as the Vedas, their study neglected by Brahmanas, are gradually forgotten in course of time. The fickle lightning was no more faithful to those benefactors of the world, the clouds, than harlots are even to men who have every accomplishment. The rainbow, stringless¹ though it was, shone in the thundering sky, as in the phenomenal universe, the product of the combination of the *guṇas*, shines the Purusha unconditioned by them. The moon was invisible behind the rain-clouds lit up by its own radiance, as the *jīva* is obscured by the ego that it activates. The peacocks, to whom the advent of the clouds is high festival, jubilantly welcomed them, as men worn out by family cares, and loathing the worldly life, greet the devotees of Achyuta. Imbibing water through their roots, the trees that had grown thin and wilted in the heat, burgeoned and flourished in their divers conditions like men grown thin and weak from austerities, when they give themselves up to pleasure. The *chakravākas*², my good sir, would not budge from the lakeside, though the shores were far from peaceful, any more than the common run of men, ruled by desires, will get away from the treadmill that is the home. Dams were breached by floods when the Lord of the gods sent down torrential rains, as in Kali the Vedic way of life is ruined by the false doctrines of the heretics. The clouds, speeded by the winds, released for the benefit of all creatures the water that sustains life, as kings gratify the wishes of their people on the seasonable advice of Brahmana counsellors (16-24).

¹ There is a pun on the word *guṇa*, which means both 'cord' and 'quality'. The rainbow, unlike the bow, has no string; but it appears in the sky, which is characterized by a *guṇa*, sound, the property of *ākāśa*. ² 'Sārāsa': J. describes it as the bird Pushkarākhyā (the Indian crane); R. as the bird known as 'Goṇārdaka'.

To the forest that was thus filled with plenty, and bore an abundance of ripe dates and rose-apples, repaired Hari with Bala for sport, followed by the cows and their herds. The cows, slow-footed from the heavy burden of their full udders, came, however, running with pleasure when called by Hari, milk dripping from their teats. The Lord saw the happy forest-dwellers, the woodland glades streaming with honey, the roaring mountain cataracts and the caves in the mountain-side close by. Sometimes, when it rained, the Lord would get into the hollow of a forest tree or a cave and there eat tubers, roots and fruits with relish. Penning on the green sward the bulls, heifers and cows, which lay down on full stomachs, fatigued by the burden of their udders, and chewed the cud with closed eyes, He sat on a rock at the water's edge with Sankarshaṇa and the cowherds, and they ate with condiments the curd and rice they had brought with them. Seeing the opulence of the season of the rains, augmented by His own power, bringing joy to all creatures, the Lord found it good (25-31).

As Rama and Keśava thus spent those days in Vraja, autumn came with its cloudless skies, clear water and gentle winds. With autumn bringing the lotus, the waters regained their wonted state, as do the minds of yogis their composure, when, having strayed from the path, they return to it. Autumn abolished at once clouds from the sky, congestion from the haunts of creatures, mire from the earth, and dirt from the water, as does devotion to Krishna the hardships of men in all the four *āśramas*. The clouds, having given up all they had, shone in their brilliant purity, like the sages who, having renounced all attachments and rid themselves of their sins, have found peace. The mountains released streams of clear water in some places, not in others, as the enlightened impart at their discretion the nectar of saving knowledge at the right time, or they do not. The creatures living in shallow pools did not realize that the water was going down, even as foolish men lost in family cares do not see that life ebbs away day by day. The creatures living in shallow waters came to know the heat of the autumn sun, as the man with a

family, who has not learnt self-control, comes to feel his poverty and misery. Gradually the earth shed its mire, and herbage its immaturity, as men of heroic temper drop the notion of 'Me' and 'Mine' in regard to those things, the body and the like, that are not the *Ātman*. At the advent of autumn, the sea was still and silent like the sage who gives up the recital of the Veda when the mind ceases striving. Husbandmen impounded water in the fields with strong bunds, as yogis, by restraining the senses, safeguard the knowledge that might be drained away through them. The moon allayed for all creatures the heat of the autumn sun, as enlightenment dispels the sorrows arising from attachment to the body, and Mukunda relieved the heart-pangs of the women of Vraja. In the cloudless sky shone the bright stars of autumn, as in the purified mind shines the meaning of the Veda. The full-orbed moon shone bright in the sky amidst the star-clusters, as on earth did Krishna, the Lord of the Yadus, surrounded by the Vṛshnis. Lapped in the equable breeze from the woods in bloom, people shed the pangs of heat, like the Gopis who embraced Krishna in their hearts.¹ When cows, deer, birds and women were ardently pursued and possessed by their males in autumn, pregnancy followed, as works done for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord are invariably followed by results. At the rising of the sun all water-blooms rejoiced, except the lily, as all men except thieves throw off their fears when kings go on progress, O King. The earth, rich with ripe corn, was splendid, celebrating many a secular festival, as well as Vedic rites like that of offering food cooked from new grain, and it shone, above all, with the happiness diffused by the presence of the incarnations of Hari. Merchants, ascetics, kings and students, who had been held up by the rains, went forth and compassed their ends, as perfected adepts, confined within the flesh while life lasts, enter into the new bodies they have won, when their time on earth is up (32-49).

¹ For *alt.* see Notes.

CHAPTER XXI

THE SONG OF THE FLUTE

Srī Suka said : Achyuta be-took Himself with the cows and their herds to the forest with its clear autumn pools, filled with the fragrant breeze from the lotus beds. Entering the forest, with its lakes, streams and hills resounding with the amorous notes of birds and bees from the flower-filled woodlands, the Lord of the Madhus grazed His cows along with Bala and the cowherds, and played on His flute. Hearing that music of the flute that kindled love, some of the women of Vraja began describing it to their companions where Krishna could not hear them. But when they began speaking of it, they were put in mind of Krishna's doings, and their hearts were filled with such a tumult of love that they could not go on. With peacock feathers¹ for His diadem, and blooms of *karṇikāra* behind His ears, robed in raiment of a golden yellow, and wearing the Vaijayanti garland, He, Whose body was like a superb actor's, entered Vṛndāvana, made lovely by His foot-prints, filling the stops of His flute with the nectar of His lips, as the throng of cowherds sang His praises. Hearing the notes of that flute, which ravished the hearts of all creatures, and speaking, of it to each other, the women of Vraja embraced Him in their hearts, O King (1-6).

For² those with eyes to see, my dears,
 Greater guerdon know we none
 Than to see those lips obey
 The flute, or those friendly eyes
 Shed their loving glance the while
 They, the sons of Vraja's Lord,
 With their mates beside them, drive
 The cattle to the woods to feed.

I saw them once, the two of them,
 Sublime in sable³ silks and gold,

¹ Such was the picture their imagination conjured up. ² Each verse is supposed to be sung by a different set of persons, so absolute consistency is not to be looked for (S.) ³ The text has only 'paridhāna' (upper garment); translation follows S.

About whose folds were interlaced
 Their garlands wove of mango shoots,
 Of peacock plumes and bunched flowers,
 Lily and lotus, as they sang,
 Like peerless players on the stage,
 Amidst the dazzled Gopa throng.

Ah Gopis ! what blessed thing
 Did ever this flute to drink
 From Dāmodar's lips at will
 The nectar that's ours by rights,
 Leaving nought but flavour pure,
 While the streams¹ that bred him thrill,
 And the trees that bore Him weep
 Like noble sires rejoicing !

Vṛndāvana, my dear, wins
 Matchless glory for this earth,
 Graced by the lovely lotus feet
 Of Devaki's son, what time the flute
 Of Govinda the peacock calls,
 Drunk with delight, to the gay dance
 And all life crowds on mountain-side
 To gaze, all other cares forgot.

Blest are these does, though silly things,
 Who, when they heard the flute's soft strains,
 With fond looks paid their homage glad,
 The black bucks standing by their side,
 To Nanda's son, his Heart's Delight,
 Who was so marvellous bedight.

When from their aerial cars they saw
 Krishna, Whose lovely looks and mien
 For women make high festival,
 And heard the flute's appealing note,

¹ The lotus streams that watered the wood are compared to the mother, and the trees in the wood from which the bamboo of the flute came, to the father or ancestors of a son who has won glory by devotion to the Lord; the flowering of the lotus in the streams is pictured as the thrill with which they shiver, and the streaming of honey from the trees, as tears of joy that the father shed.

The goddesses, they swooned at once,
Their courage sapped by love, the while
Their girdles came undone, and flowers
Fell loosened from their braided hair.

The cows with cocked ears, as they drank
The nectar-music of the flute,
And calves agape, the milk, undrunk,
Of udder dribbling from their mouths,
Stood with a tear in each eye,
As those same eyes drew Govinda
Within the fastness of the heart,
And there found joy, embracing Him.

The birds in this forest, mother,
Are sages mostly, as I ween ;
For there they sit with winkless eyes,
So Krishna they perchance might see,
On tree-boughs fair that are a mass
Of tender shoots, and ne'er a sound
Escapes their lips as they drink in
The languorous music of His flute.

The streams that hear Mukunda's song
Slacken their speed, o'erwrought by love
That shows itself in many a swirl,
And clasping with the waves, their arms,
Murāri's feet in fond embrace,
They make their lotus offerings meet.

Seeing his loved friend in the sun,
With Rama and His Gopa mates,
Grazing the cows of Vraja, while
He played His flute, the rain-cloud rose,
And swelled in love above His head
To shield Him from the burning heat,
And of his body made for Him
A parasol festooned with flowers.

How blest in love's fulfilment those
Pulinda women that found it—
The pangs of love it brought, allayed
By rubbing it on face and breasts—

That saffron, smeared on the grass,
 That had His loved ones' breasts adorned,
 And then glowed rich from the red rose
 Of His, the Much-sung's lotus feet !

First, O joy ! of Hari's faithful
 Friends, this mountain here, my dears ;
 And to the touch of feet he thrills
 Of Ram and Krishna, and he shows
 Them and their friends and all their cows
 Every honour, and he gives them
 Water, good grass, tubers, roots,
 And the freedom of his caves.

No greater marvel could there be
 Than this, my friends, that when the two,
 Marked by the tether-rope and cord,
 From wood to wood their cattle led
 With Gopa mates, the swelling flood
 Of dulcet music from their flutes
 Brought total stillness to the quick,
 And sent a shiver through the trees.

Thus the Gopis, describing to each other the exalted
 Lord's pastimes, when He roamed the Vṛndāvana forest,
 lost themselves in them (7-20).

CHAPTER XXII

KRISHNA AND THE MAIDS OF VRAJA

Srī Suka said : In the first month of the season of
 snows, the young maids of Nanda's Vraja observed vows
 and worshipped Kātyāyāni, partaking of the remnants
 of the food-offering after oblations had been made in
 the fire. Bathing in the waters of the Kālindī at dawn,
 they set up an image of the goddess in sand at the water's
 edge and worshipped it, O King. With scents and
 fragrant flowers, with oblations, incense and the waving
 of lights, with votive offerings, costly and common,
 with tender shoots, fruits and unbroken rice, the maids
 made their worship, each offering the petition, ' O
 Kātyāyāni, Mighty Māyā, Mistress of Yoga and of

World Powers, vouchsafe me the happiness of having Nanda Gopa's son for spouse. I offer my adorations to Thee.' In this wise the girls, treasuring Krishna in their hearts, observed their vows for a month, and offered their devotions to Bhadrakālī, pleading with Her, 'May Nanda's son be my spouse.' Getting up every day at early dawn, and summoning each other by name, they went to the Kālindī to bathe, their arms linked as they sang aloud Krishna's praises. One day, they were happily playing in the water and singing of Krishna, having as usual left their clothes on the bank on coming to the river. Knowing what they desired, the Lord Krishna, Lord of the master-yogis, went there with His friends to deal out the fruit of that rite. Gathering up their clothes, He quickly climbed up a *kadamba* tree, and laughing with His laughing mates, spoke thus in jest: 'Come here freely, girls, and take your clothes, each her own. I speak in earnest; I should not jest with you, when you are tired and worn out observing vows. Nor have I ever uttered an untruth, as these here know. You may come, each separately, or all together, just as you like, and take your clothes' (1-11).

When they found Him jesting, the Gopa maids, whose hearts were flooded with love, looked at each other shyly and broke into laughter, but did not get out of the water. They were enchanted by what Govinda said; and they answered, shivering as they did so, plunged to the neck in the cold water, 'This is very wrong of you, sir, you must not do this. We know you are Nanda Gopa's beloved son, and much esteemed in Vraja. We are shivering, give us our clothes. We are your servants, O lovely dark-hued One, we shall obey you in all things. You know Dharma, you must give us our clothes. If you don't, we will tell the King' (12-15).

The Lord answered, 'If you are my servants and will do my bidding, you, O sweetly smiling ones, should come here, and take your clothes.' Thereupon the little girls, fatigued and shivering with the cold, came out of the water, screening their private parts with their hands. The Lord, who was pleased and touched by their guile-

lessness and absolute purity, told them with a smile, placing their clothes on His shoulders, 'Your bathing naked, when observing vows, was without a doubt an affront to the gods. Place your joined palms on your heads and bow down in expiation of the sin, then come and take your clothes' (16-19).

Believing that their bathing naked might, as Achyuta said, amount to a violation of their vows, and being anxious that they should be fulfilled, the maids of Vraja bowed down to the ground before Him, who was Himself the fruit of all rites and the Dispeller of all sins. When He saw them standing there with bowed heads, the compassionate Lord, the son of Devaki, gave them their clothes back, pleased with their compliance. Badly tricked by Him, exposed to shame, laughed at and treated like dolls, even deprived of their clothes, they still felt no anger against Him, for they were supremely content, having their darling by their side. They put on their clothes, but did not stir from the place, charmed by the presence of the beloved; having lost their hearts to Him, they lingered, their eyes stealing bashful glances at Him (20-23).

Knowing that they had taken their vows prompted by the longing to touch His feet, the Lord Dāmodara told the fair, 'I know, chaste maids, that your object is to give yourselves to My worship. I approve of it, and you deserve to realize it. The love of those who have surrendered their hearts to Me is not for worldly pleasure. Grain that has been fried or boiled rarely sprouts again. Return to Vraja, gentle ones, you have gained your object. In the nights to come you shall sport with Me, as it was for that that you took your vows and worshipped the Great Goddess' (24-27).

Sri Suka said: Thus bidden by the Lord, the young girls, having won their cherished object, could bring themselves only with great difficulty to return to Vraja; and they did so with their minds intently absorbed in contemplation of His lotus feet (28).

Once the exalted Lord, the son of Devaki, went with His elder brother and the Gopas a long way from Vṛndāvana, grazing the cows. Seeing the trees which shielded Him with their shade from the fierce heat of the summer

sun, He addressed the Vraja folk thus: 'O Stoka-krishna, Amśu, Śrīdāmā, Subala, Arjuna, Viśāla, Rshabha, Tejaswin, Devaprastha, Varūthapa, look at these magnanimous trees, which live solely for the sake of others. While patiently putting up with wind and rain, sun and snow, they shield us from them. Ah, how blest is their life, providing subsistence for every creature! No one turns away from them disappointed, any more than from a good man. With leaf and flower, fruit and shade, with root and bark and bole, with fragrant resins, with ash and kernel and tender shoot, they satisfy our wants. Men may find supreme fulfilment by promoting the welfare of others, devoting to their service their life, wealth, intelligence and counsel.' So saying, He reached the Yamunā, passing between the trees, whose branches were bowed down with the weight of masses of tender shoots, clusters of blossoms, and fruits. Watering the cows which drank of the clear, cool and pure water, the Gopas drank their fill too, it was so sweet! As² the cows went on grazing in the woods on the bank, the Gopas felt very hungry. And they came to Rama and Krishna with their plaint.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE LORD AND THE SACRIFICERS' WIVES

The cowherds said: 'Rama, O Rama of the immense strength, O Krishna, Destroyer of the wicked, we are plagued by hunger, help us appease it.' Thus besought by the Gopas, the exalted Lord, the Son of Devaki, Who wished to shower His grace on His devotees, the Brahmanas' wives, told them, 'Go to the sacrifice in propitiation of the gods, known as the Angiras-sattra, which

¹ S. regards this passage through the wood as having taken place later in the same day after the Gopa maids episode. But this assumption cannot be reconciled with the fact, suggested by the Lord's description of the trees, that He was speaking in mid-summer; while the episode of the girls happened in the season of snows. Both J. and V. regard this passage as the prelude to the next chapter and as referring to incidents that took place in a different season. ² This verse seems more appropriate as the first of the next chapter. J. points out the abrupt break in the thread of the narrative.

Brahmanas learned in the Vedas and desirous of heaven are engaged in. Going there, beg food of them, mentioning the names of the exalted Lord, My elder brother, and Myself, and saying that you have been sent by us' (1-4).

Thus told by the Lord, they went there and begged food of the Brahmanas, throwing themselves down on the ground like a stick before them, and petitioning with folded hands, as they had been instructed, 'O gods on earth, be pleased to listen, may all good attend you. We are Gopas sent by Rama, and have come here in obedience to Krishna's orders. Rama and Achyuta are grazing the cows not far from here; they are hungry and would be glad to have food from you. You, O Brahmanas, are well-acquainted with Dharma. If you have faith as well as food, you should give them food, since they ask for it. A man incurs no sin eating food given by the sacrificer, except in the Sautrāmaṇī sacrifice, or in the interval between the taking of vows and the slaughter of the animal, in other sacrifices' (5-8).

Though they heard the Lord's request, they did not lend ear to it, for they hankered after trivial pleasures and were keen on the performance of taxing rites, being both ignorant and conceited. Though all that is comprehended in the sacrifice—the place, the time, the materials used, the incantations, the procedure, the priests and the fires, the gods, the sacrificer, the sacrifice itself, and the unseen fruit thereof—is naught but He, those stupid men, who looked upon the body as the soul, disregarded His request, looking upon Him, Who was none other than the Supreme Brahma, the Lord Adhokshaja Himself, as a mere man. When they said neither 'Yea' nor 'Nay', the Gopas, losing hope, returned and told Krishna and Rama of what had happened, O scorcher of the foe. When He heard that, the exalted Lord, the Master of the universe, laughed, and He told the Gopas, teaching them the ways of the world, 'Go there and let their wives know that I am here with Sankarshana. They will give you all the food you want, because of their great affection for Me; they dwell in their thoughts with Me' (9-14).

Going there, the Gopas saw the well-adorned women.

seated in their hall. Prostrating themselves before the good Brahmana dames, they said to them humbly, 'Salutations to you, O spouses of the Brahmanas; be pleased to lend ear to what we say. We have been sent here by Krishna, Who is not far away. Grazing the cows, along with the Gopas, He and Rama have come a long way from home. He is hungry. Be pleased to give food for Him and His following' (15-17).

Being ever eager to see Him, because they had been charmed by all that they had heard of Him, they were thrown into a flutter of excitement when they heard that Achyuta was come. Taking with them sumptuous food of the four kinds in vessels, they hastened to the Loved One, like rivers to the sea, in spite of the opposition of their husbands, brothers, relations and children. Having heard of the glory of the illustrious Lord over long years, their hearts were anchored in Him. The women saw Him with His elder brother and the Gopas, sauntering in the woods on the Yamunā bank, which were beautiful with the new shoots of the *asoka*; dark-blue in complexion, clad in raiment of a golden hue, dressed up like an actor, decorated with wild flowers, peacock feathers, mineral tints and tender shoots; one hand resting on a companion's shoulder, the other playfully twirling a lotus; lilies behind His ears, curls falling on His cheek, and on His lotus face a smile. They, whose hearts were absorbed in thoughts of Him ever since they had heard the ear-filling tales of their Darling's glory, now took Him into their hearts through their eyes, and embraced Him long and shed the pangs of separation, O King, as the modes of the ego lose themselves in the pure consciousness, sole witness in dreamless slumber (18-23).

He who sees into all hearts spoke to them with a smile, knowing, as He did, that they had come moved solely by the longing to see Him, abjuring all other attachments: 'Welcome, great dames, pray be seated. What can I do for you? It was but proper that you should have come impelled by the desire to see Me. Men of discrimination, who realize what is supremely good for them, give Me, Who am their soul, and most dear to them, a simple and straightforward devotion that asks for no

return and knows no break. What could be dearer to a man than That by reason of association with Which his own life, intelligence and mind, his body, his kin, his wife, son and wealth are all dear to him? And now you should return to the sacrificial hall to enable, by your presence at their side, the Brahmanas, your spouses, to complete as householders the Sattra sacrifice they are engaged in' (24-28).

The Brahmanas' wives answered: 'Not thus, O Lord, shouldst Thou speak to us, saying cruel words. Make good Thy word. Despite our kin, we have sought Thy feet, to wear in our tresses the wreath of holy basil that Thy feet might toss on to them. Neither our husbands, nor our parents, sons, brothers, relations or friends, will take us back; how then could others? We will seek no refuge other than Thy feet, before which we have cast ourselves, O Subduer of the foe; grant us the bliss of serving them.' The Lord assured them: 'Your spouses will not be angry with you, neither will your parents, brothers, sons, or any one else for that matter, because you have been with Me with My permission; and the gods themselves approve of your conduct. Mortals cannot hope for pleasure or for the augmentation of their love by seeking union with Me in the flesh. Fixing your minds on Me, you shall soon reach Me' (29-32).

Sri Suka said: Thus advised, the wives of the sages went back to the sacrificial hall. And their spouses did not take umbrage. They completed the sacrifice, each with his wife by his side. One of the women, whom her husband had restrained by force, discarded the body that was the product of *karma*, embracing in her heart the Lord, as she pictured Him from all that she had heard of Him. And Govinda, the All-powerful Lord, feasted with His Gopas on the food of the four kinds. Thus He, Who had assumed a human form in play, walked in the ways of the world, delighting in the pleasure He gave to the cows, the Gopas and the Gopis by His beauty, His words and His deeds (33-36).

The Brahmanas were filled with remorse. Their conscience nagging them, they sadly reflected, 'We did a

sinful thing in turning down the request of the Lords of the universe, who came in the guise of men.' Seeing the devotion, transcending all worldly considerations, that their women gave to Krishna, the exalted Lord, while they themselves were totally devoid of it, they were full of regrets and blamed themselves. 'Fie on our status, won by the threefold sacraments, our study of the Vedas, our vow of continence, versatility, high birth and skill in action ; for we showed ourselves averse to Adhokshaja ! Without a doubt, the Lord's Māyā deludes even the yogis, seeing that we, Brahmanas, the spiritual guides of men, did not know wherein our true interest lay. Look at the unquenchable devotion which even women could offer Krishna, the World Teacher, and which sundered for them the noose of death known as house and home. They had known neither initiation as the twice-born, nor tutelage in the Guru's household ; they had practised no austerities, nor meditated on the Self ; they had not devoted themselves to self-purification or to auspicious observances. And yet they showed a staunchness in their devotion to Krishna, the illustrious Lord of the master-yogis, such as we, for all our sacraments, could not muster (37-43).

Ah ! how good of Him, the Goal of the saintly, to remind us through the words of the cowherds where our lasting good lay, when we, sunk in domesticity, were wholly forgetful of it. Otherwise, what need could He, the Supreme Lord, have of us, who are His to command—He who knows no lack, and is the Dispenser of *Kaivalya* and all other blessings ? He was but playing a part. He on whom the Goddess of Fortune assiduously waits in the hope of touching His feet, deserting others and repressing her own wayward impulses, would seem to beg only to confound men. We had heard it said everywhere that the exalted Lord Vishnu, Lord of the master-yogis, Who is Himself all that constitutes the sacrifice—the time, the place, every one of the materials used, the incantations and the procedure, the priests and the fires, the gods and the sacrificer, the sacrifice itself and the unseen fruit thereof—was incarnate among the Yadus ; and yet, fools that we were, we did not know Him (44-48).

‘ But how blest we are in our wives ! It is their devotion that has led us to firm faith in Hari. We offer our adorations to Thee, O Krishna, exalted Lord, of the unthwarted intelligence, confounded by whose Māyā we wander in the maze of *karma*. May He, the Primordial Lord, forgive us our transgression, taken in as we were by His Māyā, and ignorant of His greatness.’ Thus, remembering their offence against Krishna, Whom they had scoffed at, they greatly desired to see Achyuta and His brother ; but in their fear of Kamsa, they did not stir from their homes (49-52).

CHAPTER XXIV

KRISHNA STOPS THE SACRIFICE TO INDRA

Srī Suka went on : And the Lord, remaining there with Balarāma, saw the Gopas making preparations for the sacrifice to Indra. Though He, the Soul of all, the All-seeing, knew what they were about, He asked the old men, Nanda and others, bowing to them respectfully, ‘ Tell me, father, what makes you all so furiously busy. If it is a sacrifice that you are thinking of, what is it for ? Who offers it, and to whom, and with what means ? Tell me, father, I am eager to hear, you seem so keen on it. Those men can have nothing to hide, who look upon all as they look upon themselves and recognize no such distinctions as friend, foe and neutral, since they do not look upon some as their own and others as alien. (Even in the case of those who entertain notions of difference) while a neutral may be treated as a foe and excluded from confidences, the friend, who is spoken of as one’s own self, should not. Some men perform rites, having informed themselves about them ; others, without such knowledge. For him who does any rite with knowledge, it is fruitful in a way that it cannot be for the ignorant. Now, is this act of worship being done as a result of deliberation in the light of the Sāstra, or is it merely the custom of the country ? I shall be glad if you will explain with cogent reasons’ (1-7).

Nanda said : ‘ The Lord Indra is the rain-god. The clouds are like his well-beloved bodies. They bring us the copious and welcome rains that nourish

and sustain all life. We, like all other men, worship Him, Lord and Controller of the rain-clouds, with sacrifices, my child, in which are offered up the fruits of the rain he sends. And we live on what is left, and thus realize the three ends of life. It is Indra who makes human efforts fruitful. He who defaults in this customary obligation, whether from self-will or covetousness, fear or hate, does not prosper' (8-11).

Sri Suka said : Hearing what Nanda said and other Vraja folk endorsed, Keśava replied to His father, with the intention of provoking Indra's wrath. The Lord said, 'It is by reason of his own *karma* that a creature is born, and it is by his *karma* that he dies. Happiness and misery, fear and security, all come as the result of *karma*. Should there be a Supreme Lord, Who dispenses the fruits of others' *karma*, He would still be dependent on the doer of such *karma*. He cannot do anything for one who does not act. What use is Indra to creatures who follow the dictates of their own *karma*, when he cannot undo that *karma*, which is determined by one's nature? Men are controlled by their innate dispositions and follow their promptings. Everything that exists, including gods, Asuras and men, is grounded in its own disposition. It is its *karma* that causes every creature to be born into a higher or lower order of creation and to discard that body in due course. A man's *karma* may take the form of foe or friend, or of one to whom he is indifferent. And *karma* is the Guru, nay, it is the Supreme Lord. So everyone should, following his disposition, and doing his own work, exalt *karma*. For only that by which a man lives well is his god. The man who gives his service to one, while deriving his subsistence from another, will know no lasting happiness with him, any more than an unfaithful wife with her paramour. The Brahmana should maintain himself by his knowledge of the Veda, the Kshatriya by protecting his country, the Vaiśya by business, and the Sūdra by serving the twice-born. Business is of four kinds—breeding cattle, tilling the earth, carrying on trade, and lastly, lending for profit. Of these, we have always followed the calling of keeping cows (8-21).

'*Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are, respectively, the causes of the preservation, creation and dissolution of the universe. It is as the result of mutual attraction caused by *rajas* that the world in all its variety comes into being. Under the urge of *rajas*, the clouds rain everywhere; and people get their living thanks to them alone. What is it that Mahendra does? We have no towns, rural settlements, villages, or houses. We have ever been forest-dwellers, father, we have stuck to wood and hill. Therefore let us offer sacrifice to the Brahmanas, the cows and the mountains, using the materials that have been collected for the sacrifice to Indra. Let different kinds of viands be prepared—peas soup and milk broth, weath cakes, pan-cakes and cakes made of rice flour and sugar. Let all milk products be used suitably. Let oblations be made properly in the fires by Brahmanas well-versed in the Vedas. You should give them sumptuous food, and cows as fees. Afterwards you should feed every creature down to the dogs, the Chandālas and the degraded, treating each as he deserves, and give the cows grass. Then sacrifice should be offered to the mountain. Taking your food thereafter, you should put on fine clothes, adorn yourselves with unguents, and circumambulate the cows, the Brahmanas, the fires and the mountain. This is what I think should be done, father; if you approve, let it be done. That sacrifice would be most acceptable to the cows, the Brahmanas and the hills, and to Me too' (22-30).

Srī Suka said : Hearing what the Lord, Who is Himself time, said from the desire to humble the pride of Śakra, Nanda and the rest agreed with Him. And they did everything as Madhusūdana had suggested. They had the Vedic blessings pronounced, and used those materials to make offerings to the mountain and the Brahmanas, and they fed grass to the cows. Then, the cattle going before them, they with great fervour circumambulated the mountain, with the blessings of the Brahmanas, riding with the well-adorned Gopis, who sang Krishna's exploits, in carts drawn by splendid oxen; while Krishna, taking another form, a huge one, to inspire confidence in the cowherds, consumed the vast offerings, saying, 'I am the mountain'. In His

own proper person He, along with the people of Vraja, did obeisance to His own self, saying, 'Ah ! how wonderful, the mountain blesses us in person. Taking any form he has a mind to, he might destroy the forest-folk who showed him scant respect. Let us prostrate ourselves before him for our own well-being and the welfare of the cows'. Having thus offered sacrifice to the mountain, the cows and the Brahmanas, as directed by Vāsudeva, the cowherds returned to Vraja with Krishna (31-38).

CHAPTER XXV

KRISHNA LIFTS UP THE MOUNTAIN

Srī Suka said : When he saw that his worship had been abandoned, Indra was angry with the cowherds, Nanda and the rest, who looked to Krishna for protection, O King. And in his anger he despatched the body of destructive clouds known as 'Sāmvartaka'. Imagining in his conceit that he was the overlord of creation, he told them, 'Look at the preposterous pride that prosperity has bred in these jungle-folk herding cows ; relying on the protection of that mortal Krishna, they mock the gods ! Just as there are people who, instead of seeking knowledge of the Self, wish to cross the ocean of birth and death in boats that are boats only in name, that is, by offering sacrifices, which are mere rites ; so here are these herdsmen, who have flouted me, putting their trust in a mortal, Krishna, who is loquacious, silly, stiff with pride, ignorant, and a pretender to learning. You shall humble the insolence of these, whose pride of wealth has turned their heads, and whose ego has been inflated by Krishna. Destroy their cows. I too shall follow you to Vraja, mounted on the elephant Airāvata, and taking with me the extremely powerful Maruts, for the destruction of Nanda's cowherd colony' (1-7).

Srī Suka said : Thus ordered by Maghavā, and unleashed, the clouds, mustering all their force, assailed Nanda's Gokulam with torrential showers. Lit up by lightning, and speeded by fierce winds, the thundering clouds caused a terrific hailstorm. As the clouds cease-

lessly poured in spouts thick as columns, the earth was flooded, blotting out from view elevation and depression alike. The cows, shivering under the deluge of rain and high winds, and the cowherds and their women, distracted by the cold, sought refuge with Govindā. Ducking their heads and shielding their young with their bodies as they shivered in the buffeting rain, the cows sought the feet of the Lord. 'Krishna, O Krishna, Magnanimous One, Gokulam looks to you for succour, O Lord. Protect us, O Lover of your devotees, from the wrath of the god' (8-13).

When He saw them lashed by the hailstorm and beside themselves with terror, Hari knew that it was the work of the angry Indra. 'Indra is sending down for our destruction these unseasonable and unbearably heavy showers, all hail, accompanied by high winds, because we have stopped the sacrifice to him. I shall foil his attempt completely by My puissance and thus dispel the intoxication of power that blinds those who in their folly imagine that they are the lords of creation. Gods who possessed the quality of goodness, would not be arrogant because of their authority. Humiliation at my hands of the evil-minded will serve to abate such arrogance. So I shall protect by My own power the cow colony which has sought refuge with Me, and looks up to Me for protection, and is dependent on Me. This is My unalterable resolve' (14-18).

Saying this, Krishna plucked the Govardhana mountain with one hand and held it up playfully as a child might a mushroom. And the Lord told the cowherds, 'O father and mother, and you, people of Vraja, get into the mountain-hollow with the cattle and settle yourselves there in comfort. Have no fears about the mountain falling from my hand. And you will have no worry from wind and rain. Here is shelter for you'. Thereupon, their fears set at rest by Krishna, they moved into the hollow of the mountain without crowding, taking their goods, caravans and dependants with them. Unmindful of hunger and thirst and discomfort, He bore the mountain for seven days before the eyes of the Vraja folk and did not so much as stir a step. Seeing that display of Krishna's *yogic* power, Indra was amazed.

His pride gone from him, his resolution baulked, he called off his clouds. When He saw that the sky had cleared and the sun was risen and the fierce wind and rain had stopped, the Bearer of the Govardhana mountain told the cowherds, 'You may now come out with your womenfolk, goods and children; have no fears, Gopas, the winds and the rains have stopped, and the streams are running thin' (19-26).

And the cowherds emerged, each driving his cows before him, and with his belongings piled up on his carts; then the women and children and old folk came out unhurriedly. The All-powerful Lord playfully restored the mountain to its place, even as all the world looked. The people of Vraja, their hearts full from the surging tide of affection, pressed about Him, hugging Him and in other ways showing their love. And the happy Gopis lovingly honoured Him and invoked the blessings of the All-highest on Him, with curds, unbroken rice and water. Yaśodā, Rohiṇi and Nanda, as well as Rama, first among men of strength, embraced Krishna and called blessings on Him, their hearts tremulous with love. From the sky the company of the gods, the Siddhas, Gandharvas and Chāraṇas joyfully showered Him with flowers, singing His praises, O King. At the bidding of the gods, conches were blown and kettle-drums played in heaven and the chiefs of the Gandharvas, Tumburu and others, sang. Departing thence, with the loving Gopas about Him, Hari returned to his own cowbyre with Bala. And the Gopis went joyously singing the exploits, such as this one, of Him Who so strangely moved them (27-33).

CHAPTER XXVI

NANDA ON KRISHNA'S GREATNESS

Sri Suka said: The Gopas, seeing those exploits of Krishna, were amazed, for they did not know His greatness. They went in a body to Nanda and expressed themselves thus: 'How did this child, whose deeds are so marvellous, come to be born among rustic folk, a birth wholly unworthy of him? How could he, a child of seven years, playfully lift up and carry the great

mountain on one hand lightly as the giant tusker does a lotus? How could he, while still a babe, suck with closed eyes the life, along with the milk, out of Pūtanā of the immense strength, as time sucks youth out of the bodies of men? How could the cart under which he lay have tumbled down topsy-turvy, struck by the tip of the foot of the three-month-old child, when he kicked up his heels crying? How did he kill the Daitya Trīṇāvarta, who died in agony under his stranglehold as he was carrying off into the sky the seated child, who was just one year old? Once, when his mother had tied him to a mortar for stealing butter, he brought down a pair of *arjuna* trees by crawling between them. While grazing the calves in the forest with Rama and the lads, he caught by the beak the enemy in the guise of a crane, who attacked him to kill, and tore his mandibles apart. Slaying the Asura who had got among the calves disguised as a calf, resolved to kill him, he playfully brought down the wood apples with the body. Slaying the Asura who came disguised as an ass, as well as his relations, he and Bala made the forest of palmyras, with their ripe fruit, safe for all. Getting the fierce Pralamba slain by Bala, the strong, he rescued the cattle of Vraja and the herdsmen from the forest fire. Overpowering the serpent-king, whose venom was deadly, and ejecting the humbled creature from the pool, he made the Yamunā water free from poison. The love that all of us Vraja folk feel for this son of yours, O Nanda, is something that we cannot put away from us. And the affection he too has for us seems so natural. How is one to explain this? How can one even imagine a seven-year-old child tearing up a great mountain by the roots! Therefore, O master of Vraja, our minds are beset by doubts and questionings about your son' (1-14).

Nanda said: 'Listen, O Gopas, and I will tell you what Garga told me about this boy; that should remove your doubts. "This son of yours took a body in three successive *yugas*, each of a different complexion, white, red and yellow. Now he is dark-complexioned. This son of yours was once born as the son of Vasudeva, and that is why, as the learned will explain, he is known as the gracious Vāsudeva. Your son has many names

and forms appropriate to his qualities and achievements. I do not know them all, neither does the world at large. He will rejoice the hearts of the Gopas and their colony and bring you great good fortune. Through him you will instantly get over all dangers. In days of yore, O master of Vraja, good people, harried by marauders in a state of anarchy, vanquished them with his protection and support. The fortunate ones who give him their love will never know defeat at the hands of their enemies, any more than the followers of Vishnu do at the hands of the Asuras. This son of yours, O Nanda, is thus the equal of Narayana by reason of his virtues, his splendour, fame and majesty." Therefore no one should be surprised at his exploits. While Garga himself told me this (that Krishna was comparable to Narayana) before he went home, I now think that Krishna, who works his will in perfect freedom, is an *amśa* of Narayana.' Having heard what Nanda said, quoting Garga, the people of Vraja were happy; their doubts set at rest, they honoured Nanda and Krishna (15-24).

May He Who, moved to pity at the sight of the cow-herds, cows and women distraught by thunder, hail and fierce winds, when the god angered by the stopping of the sacrifice sent a deluge of rain, smilingly protected the cow-colony that looked to Him for succour, plucking up the mountain and holding it in one hand like a child holding a mushroom, and thus humbled the pride of the great Indra—may that Indra of the cows be gracious to us (25).

CHAPTER XXVII

THE LORD CROWNED INDRA OF THE COWS

Sri Suka said: When the Govardhana mountain was lifted up and the cow-colony saved from the torrential downpour, Surabhi (the Cow of Plenty) came down from the Goloka to see Krishna. And Śakra came too. Having been shown up to contempt, he was greatly ashamed: he waited on Krishna in private and prostrated himself before Him, touching His feet with his crown that shone like the sun. He had heard of and seen for

himself the magnificence of Krishna of the limitless power, and his arrogance over his sovereignty of the three worlds was gone. He spoke to Him with folded hands (1-3).

Indra said: 'Thy essential form is of *sattva* all compact, and uniform, with no trace of *rajas* or *tamas* in it. Neither the endless flux of *guṇas* arising from *Māyā*, nor nescience, can touch Thee. How, then, could there be in Thee, O Lord, greed and other signs of nescience, which arise from the body, and lead in their turn to the taking of other bodies? And yet Thou, O Lord, chastisest, for the preservation of Dharma and the suppression of the wicked. Thou art the father and mentor of the worlds, and their supreme controller; Thou art time that prevails over all. Incarnate at will, Thou playest Thy play, and armed with the rod of correction, Thou humblest for their own good the self-esteem of those who flatter themselves that they are the lords of creation. When those who are, like me, ignorant and conceited over their lordship of the worlds, see Thee absolutely fearless in the time of trouble, they shed their conceit and in all humility begin following in the footsteps of the noble. Thus playing Thy play, Thou punishest the wicked. Be pleased to pardon me, O Lord; submerged in the flood of vanity because of my sovereign power, ignorant of Thy greatness, I sinned against Thee in my folly. May such unworthy thoughts never again cross my mind. This incarnation of Thine, O Adhokshaja, is for the destruction of the captains of the armed hosts, who are themselves a burden to the earth, and who are the cause of the very heavy burdens that afflict her, and for the prospering, O Lord, of those who devote themselves to Thy feet. Salutations to Thee, the Glorious Lord Krishna That art Immanent Spirit and yet illimitably vast, to Thee That art Vāsudeva (in whom all things abide), and the Lord of the Sātvatas. I offer my adorations to Him Who assumes a body when He will, Who is pure consciousness incarnate, Who appears as all that is, Who is the Cause thereof and the Soul that animates all creatures. When the sacrifice was stopped, I acted from offended pride and rancour, thinking to destroy the cowherd settlement by torrential

rains and winds. But Thou hast vouchsafed Thy grace to me, O Lord, by foiling my attempt and humbling my pride. I put myself into Thy hands, Thou art my God, my Guru and my Soul' (4-13).

Srī Suka said : When Maghavā thus extolled Him, the Lord laughed, and speaking in a voice deep as thunder said : ' It was for a blessing to you, O Maghavā, that I had the sacrifice stopped, since you had become inordinately proud of the power that you exercised, and I wanted you never to forget Me. He who is dead drunk with the pride of power does not see Me armed with the rod of chastisement. He whom I wish to bless I cause to fall from affluence. You may go, Sakra, but remember My injunction. Carry on, all of you, exercising your authority vigilantly and without egotism ' (14-17).

Then the high-minded Surabhi, the Cow of Plenty, attended by her progeny, made her reverence to the Supreme Lord, Who was there in the guise of a cowherd, and addressed Him. Surabhi said : ' Krishna, O Krishna, Master-yogi, Soul and Origin of the universe, we have found a Protector in Thee, O Achyuta, That art the Overlord of all the worlds. Thou art our Supreme Deity. Be Thou, therefore, our Indra, O Master of the worlds, to ensure the welfare of the cows, the Brahmanas and the gods, and all other good souls. It is under Brahmā's direction that we have come to consecrate Thee as our Indra. Thou, O Soul of all that is, hast appeared on earth to rid it of its burden ' (18-21).

Srī Suka went on : Thus, making her request to Krishna, Surabhi bathed Him in her own milk. At the bidding of the gods and their mothers, Indra, along with the divine sages, bathed the Dāsārha in the waters of the celestial Gangā, drawn by the trunk of Airāvata ; and he gave Him the name of Govinda. Tumburu, Nārada and other Gandharvas, Vidyādhara, Siddhas and Chāraṇas, who were assembled there, sang the praises of Hari that purify the world of its sins, and the heavenly nymphs danced with joyous abandon. Those who were like banners raised above the multitude of the gods praised Him and rained down showers of marvellous flowers on Him. The three worlds were supremely content, and the cows drenched the earth with milk.

The rivers that ran with divers juices were in flood, the trees dripped honey, the untilled earth brought forth an abundance of corn and herbage, the mountains yielded up their gems. When Krishna was crowned, O scion of the Kurus, all creatures, including those that are cruel by nature, dropped their enmity towards each other. Having thus consecrated Govinda as the Lord of the cows and of the cow settlements, Sakra, given leave to depart, returned with the gods to the celestial regions (22-28).

CHAPTER XXVIII

NANDA RESCUED FROM VARUṆA'S WORLD

Srī Suka said : Having fasted and worshipped Janār-dana on the eleventh day of the fortnight, Nanda got down to the waters of the Kālindī on the twelfth to bathe. He entered the water, not noticing that it was the hour of the night when the Asuras are abroad ; and one of Varuṇa's servants, an Asura, seized him and took him to Varuṇa. Not seeing him anywhere, the cowherds cried out in alarm, calling Rama and Krishna. On hearing their distressed cries, the Omnipresent Lord knew that His father had been taken to Varuṇa ; and reassuring His people, He went to Varuṇa, O King. When he saw that it was Hrshikeśa Who had come, the Guardian of the worlds honoured Him with princely hospitality ; and rejoicing to see Him, addressed Him thus. Varuṇa said : ' This day my life has been fulfilled ; I have attained my supreme desire, O Lord. Those who worship Thy feet, exalted Lord, reach journey's end. Salutations to Thee, the exalted Lord of the infinite auspicious attributes, the Brahma Ever-perfect, the Supreme Soul and Controller, in Whose presence the Māyā that fashions the world variously remains unnoticed. Be pleased to pardon the fault of my retainer, the stupid creature, who brought Thy father here out of ignorance, not knowing his duty. Please take Thy father away, O Govinda That lovest him dearly' (1-8).

Srī Suka said : Thus pacified, Krishna, the Lord Paramount of the universe, went back taking His father with Him and bringing joy to His kin. Nanda was

amazed, seeing with his own eyes the magnificence, such as he had never seen before, of the Guardian of the worlds, and the deference all of them showed to Krishna; and he reported these things to his kinsmen. The cowherds felt that He must be the Supreme Lord Himself, and they were seized with a great longing: 'May the Sovereign Lord lead us to His own Abode, and reveal too His essential Self!' (9-11).

The exalted Lord, Who sees into all hearts, saw what His people desired, and out of His abounding grace wished to fulfil that desire. He reflected, 'Men wander in the maze of life enmeshed in bodies, high or low, as the result of *karmas* done from desire, which is itself the product of nescience, and they do not understand their own true nature.' And Hari, in His infinite mercy, showed the cowherds His own essential form, and the world¹ He inhabits, which lies beyond Prakṛti. He showed them the Brahma, Which is Truth and Consciousness, Infinite, Self-luminous and Everlasting, and Which the sages see with the mind stilled when they have freed themselves from the sway of the *guṇas*. Then they were taken to the pool known as Brahma's Pool where Akrūra had his vision, and made to plunge into it. When Nanda and the others saw that world of the Brahma and Krishna being extolled in it by the singing of Vedic hymns, they were filled with bliss and supremely content. Boundless was their amazement when Krishna raised them out of the water again (12-17).

CHAPTER XXIX THE RĀSA FESTIVAL

Srī Suka said: And the Lord, when He saw those autumn nights were come in which the jasmine bloomed, gave His mind to play, summoning His ineffable *yogic*

¹ The cowherds are shown first, the essential Brahma free from all adjuncts, the body and such like; then they are shown the abode (Vaikuntha), of the Lord, the Saguna Brahma. (*Alt.*). The Brahma Itself is figuratively described as a pool; plunging into It means going into deep *samādhi*. Having thus experienced the Brahma, they are wakened from *samādhi* by Krishna and shown Vaikuntha, as it was later shown to Akrūra by Krishna's grace.

power. At that moment the moon rose, tinting the face of the East an orange red with his delightful rays and assuaging for men the pangs of heat, like the lover, seen after a long absence, painting his beloved's face with saffron. Seeing the orb moon that wakes the lily, bright as the face of Rāmā and with the colour of fresh saffron on it, and the forest an enchantment under the mellow light, He played a dulcet tune, ravishing the hearts of those women of the winsome eyes. On hearing the song that quickened love, the women of Vraja, whose hearts Krishna had taken captive, hastened to their darling without letting each other know, their ear-pendants swinging with the speed of their gait. Some, who were milking cows, stopped it midway and went in all eagerness; others, leaving the milk on the hob and the wheat cooking over the oven. Those who were serving food, or feeding their babes at the breast, or waiting on their husbands, went likewise, dropping whatever they were doing; those who were themselves eating, left off and went. And so did those who were applying cosmetics, or rubbing themselves with unguents, or painting their eyes with kohl. And some came into Krishna's presence wearing their clothes and jewellery all wrong (1-7).

Though their husbands, parents, brothers and relations sought to prevent their going, they did not turn back; they were under a spell, Govinda had stolen their hearts. Some Gopis, who were caught in the inner apartments and could not get out, closed their eyes and intensely meditated on Krishna, on Whom they had long dwelt in their thoughts. Thus united with Him, the Supreme Soul, through contemplation, even though they looked upon Him only as a lover, they discarded the body composed of the three *guṇas*; for their bonds had snapped instantly with the wiping out of their sins by the intolerable agony of separation from the Beloved, and the dissipation of their merits by the ecstasy of bliss from Achyuta's embrace, enjoyed in meditation (8-11).

The King asked: 'They thought of Krishna, O sage, merely as one who was supremely to be desired, not as the Brahma. How could there be cessation of *samsāra* for them, when they were addicted to pleasure?' (12).

Srī Suka said: I have told you already how the King of Chedi found liberation, even though he hated Hr̥shīkeśa; how much more easy, then, it should have been for those who loved Adhōkshaja? When the exalted Lord, Who is eternal, infinite, and unconditioned by the *guṇas*, which He controls, manifests Himself, it is for the supreme good of men, O King. Whoever constantly thinks on Hari, moved whether by physical desire or wrath, fear or affection, kinship or devotion, becomes completely merged in Him. It should not be a matter of surprise to you that the exalted Lord Who knows no birth, the Lord of the Master-yogis, Krishna, can effect this, since it is from Him that the entire universe obtains its release (13-16).

When those women of Vraja came into His presence, the Lord spoke to them, beguiling them by the witchery of His words. The Lord said: 'Welcome, noble dames, what can I do to give you pleasure? I trust all is well with Vraja. Tell me why you have come. It is night, a dreadful time when horrid creatures are abroad. Go back to Vraja, women must not tarry here, O lovely ones. Not seeing you, your parents, children, brothers and husbands will be searching for you; you must not give your relations cause for alarm. You have seen the forest in flower, lit up by the full moon, lovely with the tender leaves of trees as they sway in the lightsome breeze that blows from the Yamunā. Go back now to the byres without further delay, O faithful spouses, and serve your husbands with loving attention. The calves will be bleating, the children crying; go, feed the children, and milk the cows (17-22).

'Or perhaps you have come moved by your affection for Me. That is as it should be, for all creatures find delight in Me. But sincere devotion to the husband is the supreme duty of woman; so is the service of his relations and the care of children, auspicious ones. Women who wish to attain to the worlds of bliss should not desert the husband, who is not guilty of irredeemable sins, even if he be vicious, unlucky, old, stupid, diseased, or a pauper. For a woman of good family, the joys of illicit love would spell ruin to her reputation and destroy all hopes of heaven. They are trivial, obtained with

great difficulty, beset with fears, and met with universal scorn. Attachment to Me is not fostered by proximity, as it is from hearing of Me, seeing Me, meditating on Me and talking of Me. Therefore go back to your homes' (23-27).

Sri Suka said: Hearing those unwelcome words spoken by Govinda, the Gopis grieved, their fondest hopes dashed to the ground; they were plunged in endless care. They stood silent, under their great burden of grief, hanging down their heads, the lips like *bimba* fruit parched by the sighs of suffering, their kohl-stained tears washing the saffron off their breasts, as they traced on the ground aimlessly with their toes. When Krishna, Whom they loved above all things, repulsed them as if He did not love them, they, who had renounced all other attachments for His sake, wiped their tear-blurred eyes, and spoke stammering with indignation (28-30).

The Gopis said: 'Speak not thus, O Lord, uttering cruel words. Do not reject us, O Thou That art ever free. Accept us, who have cast ourselves at Thy feet, renouncing all enjoyments, even as the Deity, the Primordial Lord, does those who yearn for liberation. Thy teaching about the whole duty of woman—Thou, of course, knowest all about Dharma, O Lord!—as consisting in loyalty to husband, children and relations could only point to Thee Thyself as the One to whom that duty is owed, since Thou art the Ground and Support of those whom Thou askest us to serve; for Thou art the Soul in all embodied creatures and thus nearest and dearest to them. The wise give all their love to Thee, their own Soul, ever dear to them. What shall we do with husband, children and others, who bring only sorrow and suffering? Therefore, be gracious to us. O supreme Lord, do not shatter the hopes of felicity that we have long built on Thee, O Lotus-eyed. Our hearts, happy so long, bound up with our homes, Thou hast stolen, and our hands, too, which rejoiced in household tasks; and now our feet refuse to take a single step away from Thy feet. How then shall we go back to Vraja, or what shall we do? Drench, Dearest, with the flood of nectar from Thy lips, the fire of desire kindled

by Thy laughing look and sweet song ; else, O Comrade, we shall be consumed in the fire of separation, meditating on Thy feet, and attain Thee (like the yogis), Ever since we once touched for a brief while, O Lover of the forest folk, the soles of Thy feet, which even Rāmā is but occasionally given a chance to touch, and were filled with delight by Thee, we have been unable even to abide the presence of any other man. The Goddess of Plenty, a glance from whose eye it is the ambition of every other god to attract, covets, in rivalry with the holy basil, the dust of Thy lotus feet, which Thy devotees revel in, though She has her assured place on Thy breast. It is that dust which we beseech of Thee. Be propitious to us, O Dispeller of grief, we have cast ourselves at Thy feet, discarding house and home, in our longing to serve Thee. Grant us Thy servitude, O Jewel among men, we are afire with the intolerable passion kindled by Thy glance with the bewitching smile. Having looked on Thy face framed in its curls, the cheeks with the sheen of the ear-pendants on them, the lips dropping nectar, and the laughing glance, having seen those sturdy arms that ward off fear, and that breast wherein the Goddess of Plenty finds all delight, we would be Thy slaves. Where is the woman in the three worlds, Beloved, who will not be found to swerve from the path of duty, beguiled by the murmurous and long-drawn sweetness of Thy melody, and the sight of this lovely figure, the ornament of the three worlds, which sent a thrill of delight through the cows and the birds, the trees and the deer ? We have not the least doubt, O Lord, that Thou hast taken birth in a noble family to free Vraja from fear and distress, even as the Primordial Lord was incarnate to protect the world of the gods. Therefore, deign, O Friend of the stricken, to place Thy lotus hand on the burning breasts and the heads of Thy hand-maidens' (31-41).

Srī Suka said : Hearing those words that came from hearts filled with despondency, the Lord of the master-yogis cheered them with His laughter, and in His compassion set Himself to make them happy, though His delight is always in the Self. Surrounded by them, whose faces had bloomed under the gaze of the Beloved,

Achyuta, with His magnificent ways, shone like the moon surrounded by the stars, radiant with His genial laughter, His teeth gleaming like *kunda* buds. Wearing the Vaijyanti garland, He, leader of that band of hundreds of youthful women, wandered with them in the woods, enhancing their beauty, and singing at the top of His voice, as they sang His praises. Going with the Gopis to the sandbanks on the river, with their sand delightfully cool from the breeze that blew over its waves and brought the scent of lilies, He enjoyed Himself. He caressed the beauties of Vraja, kindling their love by throwing His arms about them, embracing them, brushing lightly against their hands and their tresses, their thighs, their girdle-knots and their breasts, by jesting with them and pinching them, by His playfulness, His meaning looks and laughter. Their self-esteem flattered by the marked attention the exalted Lord Krishna, the Mighty Soul, showed them, the proud women began to think of themselves as being superior to all other women on earth. When He saw their pride in their beauty and their self-conceit, Keśava promptly disappeared, to quench their pride and confer His grace on them (42-48).

CHAPTER XXX

THE LORD DESERTS THE GOPIS

Sri Suka said: When the Lord disappeared suddenly, the lovely women of Vraja grieved, not seeing Him, as the cow-elephants do when the lord of the elephant herd is missing. The women, whose hearts the Lord of Ramā had charmed by His way of walking, His affection and His smile, His amorous glance and enchanting talk, His merry sport and wantonnesses, were so totally absorbed in Him that they were happy imitating His exploits. Identifying themselves with the Beloved to the point of reproducing His very gait and smile, His way of looking and talking and the like, the doting women proclaimed to each other. 'I am He,' as they engaged in sportive dalliance after the manner of Krishna. Singing His praises aloud as they sought Him, they moved in a body from wood to wood, asking the trees, like one who had lost his wits, where they could find

Him, the Puruṣha Who, like space, is within and without all that is. 'Did you, O peepul, O fig tree, and you banyan, see Nanda's son, who has gone stealing our hearts with his glances full of love and laughter? And did you, O amaranth, *aśoka*, betel vine, and you, *punnāga* and *champakā*, see Rāma's younger brother, whose smile humbles the pride of haughty women, go hence? Ah, basil, auspicious one, who love the feet of Govinda, did you see your darling Achyuta, who wears you, with the swarm of bees attending? Did you see Mādhava, O *mālātī*, *mallikā*, *jātī*, *yūtikā*? Perhaps He went this way, making you happy with the touch of His hand? May we beg of you, mango, *prīyāla* and jack-fruit, *asana*, baubinia and rose-apple, sun-plant and *bēl*, *bakula* and *āmra*, *kadamba* and *nipa*, and all you trees that stand on the banks of the Yamunā and live wholly for others, to tell us, who are beside ourselves with grief, which way Krishna took. What austerities did you practise, O earth, that you, jubilant under the touch of Keśava's feet, glow with the thrill that shows itself in the sprouts of young grass? Was that thrill imparted by His feet just now, or when He of the great strides bestrode the three worlds? Or did you get it when He, with His boar's body, pressed you to His bosom? Was Achyuta hereabouts with His beloved, O spouse of the black buck, making your eyes rejoice in the beauty of His limbs, my friend? For here is the lingering perfume of the garland of *kunda* blooms worn by the Lord of the clan, coloured by the saffron from the breast of His lady-love as He embraced her. Does Rāma's younger brother acknowledge your obeisance with a kindly glance, O trees, as He walks here with His arm round the shoulders of His beloved and a lotus in His hand, followed by the drunken swarm of bees that haunt the basil?—Ask these vines, my dears; though embraced by the arms of the forest tree, they have most certainly felt the touch of His finger nails—see, they have bristled all over with joy!' (1-13).

Thus the Gopis, intensely agitated by the search for Krishna, and talking like mad folk, were so totally absorbed in Him that each one of them imitated this or that playful act of the Lord. One of them, acting the part

of Krishna, drank at the breast of another, who was being Pūtanā. Another, who played the babe, kicked weeping at the one who was the cart. A third, in the character of the Asura, carried off another who fancied that she was the child Krishna. One crawled on her knees, dragging her feet with the anklet bells on them tinkling. When two of them played Krishna and Rāma, some others were the Gopas. One slew the Asura disguised as the calf, another the crane. When one called the cows that were far away, as Krishna used to do, and played the flute, and diverted herself in imitation of Him, the others applauded saying, 'Well done !' (14-18).

One of them, walking about with her arm on another's shoulder, had so completely forgotten herself in Him that she said to those around her, as she stepped daintily, 'I am Krishna, see how beautiful is my gait !' 'Don't you be afraid of the wind and rain, I am shielding you against them' : so saying, she held her upper garment with one hand over her head, with seeming effort. One, getting up on another's shoulders and placing her foot on her head, said, O King, 'Get away from here, you wicked serpent ! Don't you know that I have come into the world to punish the wicked ?' Another present there said, 'O Gopas, here is the dreadful forest fire. Close your eyes instantly, I shall easily lead you to safety.' A woman, thin with the grief of separation, tied to a mortar with a garland by another, hid her face, with its lovely eyes, in her hands, pretending to be afraid (19-23).

As they went their way asking the climbing vines and trees of Vṛndāvana for news of Krishna, they observed at one place in the woods the footprints of the All-Highest. 'These are clearly the footprints of Nanda's great-souled son ; the marks of the flag-staff, the lotus, the thunderbolt, the goad and the barleycorn show them to be his.' Following the footprints to find the way He had taken, they saw them, a little farther, mixed up with a young woman's ; and they cried out in distress, 'Who was she that left these footprints as she went about with Nanda's son, with His forearm resting on her shoulder, like the tusker's trunk on the cow elephant's ? She must have uniquely gratified the exalted Lord Hari,

the All-Powerful, since Govinda, deserting us, has joyfully taken her to some secret place. Ah ! my dears, how blest must be these particles of dust from Govinda's lotus feet, which Brahmā and Īsvara and the goddess Ramā surely place on their heads to expiate their faults ! But it is anguish to see these footprints of hers who drinks in the sweetness of Achyuta's lips, the Gopis' all, in secret, keeping it all to herself. But ah ! her foot-prints are missing here ! Evidently the fond lover carried His darling on His shoulders, when He saw that the spiky grass hurt her tender soles. And here the Beloved gathered flowers for the woman who doted on Him ; look at the imperfect footprints, where the forefoot has pressed deeper. And here the gallant dressed the hair of His lady-love ; without a doubt He sat down here to twine the flowers in His mistress's hair¹ (24-34).

He who finds all delight in the Self and all entertainment, Who is ever heart-whole, had played with her, (said Suka) merely to show up the abjectness of infatuated lovers and the wickedness of women. The Gopis, pointing out what they saw to each other, went on their way in total self-forgetfulness, when they came upon that Gopi whom Krishna had led away, abandoning the others in the forest. She had thought that she must be peerless among women. 'Deserting the Gopis who came to Him borne on the wings of passion, He clings to me, He loves me so much.' And in her conceit she told Him, when they had reached a certain spot in the forest, 'I cannot walk ; you will have to take me wherever you want me to go'. Thus told, He said to His sweetheart, 'Get up on my shoulders', and the next moment Krishna had vanished, leaving the young woman heart-broken. She cried, 'Ah, my Lord, my Heart's Delight, where have you gone, my Darling ? O where

¹ Here is to be found, in a number of commentaries, though not Sridhara's, a verse and a half, which may be rendered thus: 'See these deeper foot-prints, Gopis, left by Krishna, apparently shouldering a heavy burden ; the infatuated lover must have carried his lady. And here the mighty one no doubt set her down, in order to gather flowers'.

are you of the mighty arm? Show yourself to me, your handmaid, O Comrade, I am miserable' (35-40).

The Gopis, seeking to find out whither the Lord had gone, saw not far off this companion of theirs, dazed by the separation from the Beloved and grief-stricken. Hearing her tell of the marked favour Mādhava had conferred on her, and the disgrace she had brought upon herself by her own wickedness, they were amazed. They went farther into the forest so long as the moonlight lasted; when darkness fell, the women gave up the search. Thinking of Him, speaking of Him, imitating His various deeds, wholly absorbed in Him, and singing His praises, they remembered neither self nor home. Returning to the sands of the Kālindī, they who longed for Krishna's return assembled there and sang of Him, their hearts intent on Him (41-42).

CHAPTER XXXI

THE SONG OF THE GOPIS.

The Gopis sang¹ :

With Thy advent, O Lord,
Vraja grows in glory,
For here is Indirā,
And She prospers all;
Darling, let us see Thee—
We, Thine own, who live
For Thee and Thee alone,
Seek Thee everywhere.

With eyes that vanquish quite
Th' opulence within
The comely lotus blown
On autumn pool,
Thou dost, O Lord of Love,
Slay Thy slaves unbought:
Is this no murder, then?
Tell us, bounteous Lord.

¹ Each verse is supposed to be spoken by a different Gopi, but S. points out that they cohere. He suggests that in practically every verse "Darling, let us see Thee" might be taken as an unspoken refrain.

From deadly water's bane
 And demon python,
 From furious wind and rain
 And thunder's fire,
 From Maya's son and steer¹,
 And all menace else
 Thou didst preserve us oft,
 O Thou, Prince of men.

No Gopi's son art Thou,
 That we know for sure,
 But Witness in the heart
 Of all bodied selves ;
 Granting Brahmā's prayer,
 Thou hast risen, Friend,
 Among the Sātvat clans
 All the world to save.

That lotus hand of Thine,
 Which from fear redeems
 Of life's travail and death
 Them that seek Thy feet,
 And grants the heart's desire,
 Lay, O Vṛshṇis' Lord,
 The hand that clasps Śrī's hand,
 Lay on our heads, sweet.

Dispeller, Valiant One,
 Of Vraja's distress,
 Who smitest with a smile
 Thine own people's pride,
 Come to us, O Comrade,
 E'er Thy handmaids true ;
 Let's hapless women see
 Thy lovely lotus face.

Plant Thou those lotus feet
 That the sins destroy
 Of those that cleave to them—
 They, own Home of Śrī,

¹ (*lit*) 'the sons of the bull and of Maya': the former being the Asura that came as a calf, and the latter, Vyomāsura.

Walked behind grazing kine,
 Lodged on serpent's hood—
 Plant Thou them on our breasts,
 Quench love's gnawing pain.

The music of Thy speech¹
 Full of lovely words
 That to the wise heart speak,
 We faint, recalling.
 Come to us, Lotus-eyed,
 Come, O Valiant One,
 With nectar from those lips
 Thy handmaids revive.

Thy tale that's nectar-sweet
 The parched heart sustains,
 And, by seers extolled,
 Wipes out the heart's stains;
 To hear it is bliss,
 It brings the mind peace;²
 They indeed give greatly
 That make it prevail.³

Thy merry laughter, sweet,
 And Thy loving look,
 Thy sport—it does one good
 Just to think on these;
 The secret fun⁴ we had,
 That thrilled the heart's core,
 Still keeps us, wily One,
 In a sweet unrest.

When Thou from Vraja, Lord,
~~Hiest with the herd,~~
 We fall to thinking then,
 'Those feet, lotus-soft,

¹ Some commentators take *girā* not as qualifying 'muhyatīh', but as qualifying *āpyāyasya*; the verse would then mean 'Revive with the music of Thy speech . . . and the nectar of Thy lips ua, Thy fainting handmaids.' ² The original is *Srīmad* (lit. that which brings prosperity); translation follows S. . . (lit.) 'spread it far and wide'. ⁴ (lit.) pastimes and jests.

Treading on spiky corn
Or sharp blade, alas,
How they must hurt !' and, dear,
How we suffer then !

With fitful glimpse vouchsafed,
As evening falls,
Of Thy face all powdered,
Beneath its black curls,
With dust like pollen rich
On lotus bee-haunted,
Thou kindest, Cunning One,
Love's flame in the heart.

Place on our breasts, O Love,
Slayer of man's woes,
Thy lotus feet that grant
The suppliant's lack ;
Praised by the Lotus-born,
They the earth adorn,
Saviour in peril sought,
Benison Supreme.

The nectar of Thy lips,
Which prospers amour,
And with its long-drawn note
The flute has well kissed,
It banishes sorrow,
And makes men forget
All other loves ; Great-heart,
Give us that to drink.

Daylong we see Thee not,
In the woods roaming ;
To us a second then
Seems eternity.

When we lift up our eyes
To Thy blessed face,
Curl-kissed—sure, dotard He
That to them gave lids !
Ignoring spouse and son,
Brother, kith and kin,
Achyuta, here we come
So we be near Thee.

Deceiver, who but Thee,
 Knowing, would desert
 Helpless women at night
 Tranced by Thy lofty song ?

We call to mind the word,
 Secretly spoken,
 Lighting the flame of love ;
 And that laughing face ;
 And those loving glances ;
 And the generous breast
 Where Sri dwells ; and the heart
 Faints oft with longing.

Dear, Thy coming now
 Anodyne would be
 To Vraja and the world,
 Universal good ;
 But we are Thine, and we,
 Longing for Thee, live ;
 Give us a jot of that
 Would end the heart's smart.

Those lovely lotus feet of Thine
 That we should place in fear
 And gently on our breasts, my love,
 Because they are so hard,
 They take Thee to the woods, won't they
 By grit¹ and sand get hurt ?
 'They must !' the mind reels thinking,
 —For, ah !, Thou art our life ! (1-19)

CHAPTER XXXII THE REUNION

Sri Śuka said: Thus the Gopis sang at the top of their voices and made many a lament ; and they wept aloud, O King, in their longing to see Krishna. And Sourī with a smile on His lotus face appeared suddenly before them, clad in yellow silks, crowned with a chaplet of flowers, a veritable Manmatha who could drive the god of love himself love-mad. On seeing the Beloved before them,

¹ For *kūrpa*, see foot-note to verse 18, Ch. LXXXVII *infra*.

the gentle women, their eyes opening like flowers in their joy, rose in a body like the limbs when life returns. One, delighted, took Sauri's lotus hand between her joined palms; another laid on her shoulder His arm smeared with sandal paste. A woman delicately formed received in her cupped hand the *pan* He had chewed. In a fever of desire another took and placed a lotus foot on her breasts. One who was beside herself with the frenzy of love, knitted her brows, bit her lips and looked at Him as if she were raining down on Him the insulting blows of sidelong glances. Another, devouring His lotus face with unwinking eyes, felt no satiety, any more than do the devotees of His feet. One took Him into her heart through the orifice of the eyes, and closing them sat hugging Him, her body athrill, deluged by bliss like the yogi. All of them, feasting their eyes on Keśava, were supremely content; they shed the pangs of separation, as do the *jīvas* in deep sleep, united with the Witness (1-9).

Surrounded by them, who had shaken off their grief, the exalted Lord Achyuta shone with enhanced splendour, like the Purusha attended by His Powers, my son, as He took them with Him and established Himself on a sand-bank of the Kālindī. With its carpet of soft sand, which the Kṛishnā had spread with those hands, her waves, it was delightful in the streaming autumn moonlight, which had dispersed the darkness of night, while a gentle breeze blew bringing the fragrance of *kunda* and *mandāra* in bloom, and the bees with it. Freed of their heart-ache by the joy of seeing Him, they, even like the Vedas, attained the summit of their desires. And they made a seat for Him, the soul's Comrade, spreading their upper garments, stained with the saffron on their breasts. Seated amidst the throng of Gopis and receiving their loving homage, the Supreme Lord, Whom the master-yogis lodge in the heart's core, shone with a body which had gathered in itself all the loveliness to be found in the three worlds. Propitiating Him, Who inflamed their love, with their laughing playful glances and the coquetry of the brow, placing His hands and feet on their laps and fondly pressing them, they sang His praises; and then, with just a touch of pique, they spoke. The

Gopis said : ' Some love those who love Them ; the contrary is the case with others, who love even those who do not love them. Yet others love neither those that love them nor those that do not. Will you please clear up these things for us, Sir ? ' (10-16).

The Lord replied : ' Those who love others because they love these are at heart moved by self-interest, my dears. That love is prompted neither by sincere attachment nor by Dharma ; it is pure selfishness, nothing else. Those who devotedly serve others, without expecting to be loved, as do men of compassion, for instance, or parents of children, act in the spirit of Dharma pure and simple, or from disinterested affection, lovely ones. As for those that are indifferent even to them that love them—and who would expect such to love where they are not loved ?—they may be realized souls who find all joy in the Self, or men who have no unfulfilled desires ; or they may be just insensible clods or wretches guilty of the blackest ingratitude. I myself do not readily respond to the love that is shown Me, because I would have My devotees dwell on Me incessantly in their thoughts, like the pauper who, having found treasure and lost it, is so wholly absorbed thinking of it that he is aware of nothing else. I hid myself from your sight, my gentle ones, so that you might constantly meditate on Me, but remained by your side unperceived, loving to hear you, who had for my sake abandoned the world, the Vedas, and family ties. Therefore, my loves, you should not be cross with Me, you are very dear to Me. I could not repay you, even if I had the length of days of an immortal, for the flawless love you gave Me, snapping the ageless fetters of house and home. Your goodness to Me must be my quittance ' (17-22).

CHAPTER XXXIII THE RĀSA REVELS

Srī Suka said : When they heard those charming words of the Lord and had their longings fulfilled by the touch of His body, the Gopis shed the pangs of separation. Then Govinda began there the Rāsa dance, in which those devoted women, ornaments of their sex,

joined with delight, linking their arms. The Rāsa revels, brilliant with the band of Gopis ranged in a circle, commenced with Krishna, Lord of the master-yogis, taking His place between every two of them and throwing His arms round their necks, while every Gopi imagined that He was with her alone. Instantly, the sky was crowded with hundreds of aerial cars carrying the celestials and their spouses, all eager spectators. Thereupon the kettle-drums sounded, and showers of flowers fell, and the great Gandharvas sang with their women His spotless glory. From the Rāsa circle rose the merry din of bracelet, anklet and bell, when the women found themselves with their Beloved. In their company, the exalted Lord, the Son of Devakī, shone all the more, like a great emerald between drops of gold. Footing it featly in the dance, with graceful movements of the hands, and the smiling vivacious play of eye-brows, their waists looking as if they would snap any moment, their breasts and bodices quivering, and their ear-pendants dangling against their cheeks, Krishna's loves shone like streaks of lightning from a mass of clouds, as they sang His glory, their faces covered with perspiration, their braids and zones coming undone. And as they danced, the women broke into high-pitched song, their voices graced by many a tuneful mode, their hearts thrilling to Krishna's love and the touch of His hands; that song enveloped the universe. One of them, elaborated at a high pitch melodic¹ patterns in concert with Mukunda without the two getting mixed up; and He, greatly pleased, applauded her warmly on its excellence. And she then sang the same to the Dhruva time-measure, and He made her proud with His praise (1-10).

Thoroughly fatigued by the Rāsa dance, a Gopi, with her bracelets slipping down and the jasmine falling from her hair, flung her arm round the shoulder of the Lord Who wields the Mace, as He stood by her side. Another, inhaled the fragrance of the arm, smelling of lilies and smeared with sandal, that He had placed on her shoulder, and kissed it, the down on her body standing on end. To one, who laid against His cheek her

¹ (alt.) 'pure melodic patterns along with Mukunda.'

own lit up by the flash of her ear-pendant, as it tossed about in the dance, He gave the *pan* He had chewed. A Gopi, dancing and singing to the tinkling of anklet and girdle, and feeling tired, laid on her breasts the healing lotus hand of Achyuta, Who was by her side (11-14).

Thus the Gopis, having won the love of Achyuta, the Beloved of the Goddess Sṛī, to Whom She is wholly devoted, sang His glories with His arms round their necks, and were in the seventh heaven of bliss. With radiant looks, and lilies tucked behind the ears, the curls adorning their cheeks, and beads of perspiration on their faces, the Gopis danced with the Lord, as their chaplets slipped down from their tresses, in that Rāsa festival where the bees were the singers and the music came from bracelets, anklets and bells. With touch of hand and embrace, with affectionate glance and badinage, the Lord of Rāmā gave Himself up to gay flirtation, sporting with the beauties of Vraja, like a child playing with his own reflection. The women of Vraja, their senses in a whirl from the ecstasy of contact with His body, their garlands and ornaments tumbling down, were unable to collect themselves sufficiently to re-fasten their hair, their upper garments or their breast-bands, O best of the Kurus. Seeing Krishna sporting thus, the celestial damsels swooned under the torment of love. The moon with the company of stars stood lost in wonder. Multiplying Himself into as many as there were Gopis, the Lord feigned enjoyment as He sported with them, though it is in the Self that He finds all delight (15-20).

When they were exhausted with their strenuous play, the compassionate Lord lovingly stroked their faces with the hand that brings supreme bliss, my friend. Transported with joy at the touch of His finger-nails, the Gopis sang the holy deeds of their Lord, expressing their adoration for Him by the loveliness of their cheeks, with the lustre on them of glittering gold ear-pendants and gleaming locks, and the gaiety of their nectar-sweet glances. Being tired, He entered the water with them to throw off the fatigue,—as the lord of the elephant herd does with his cows when he has spent himself rooting

up the river-bank¹—pursued by the bees singing like the great Gandharvas, which were drawn to the garland that lay on His breast crushed by their embrace and stained by the saffron on their breasts. As the young women with their loving glances drenched Him with water from all sides, laughing in high glee, He, supremely content in the Bliss of the Self as He is, enjoyed Himself hugely, doing² the same thing to them and sporting in the water like the lordly elephant, while the gods sang His praises and showered flowers on Him. Then He roamed the woods on the banks of the Yamunā, filled with the scent of flowers on land and water, that the wind brought, the swarms of bees and the bevy of damsels following Him as the cow-elephants follow the tusker dripping with ichor. Thus He, Who always does His will, spent all those moonlight nights with the loving women, savouring the amorous delights of autumn celebrated by the poets, and containing His virility within Himself (21-26).

The King asked: 'The Lord Paramount of the universe is incarnate, it is well known, with an *amśa* of Himself in the world for the establishment of Dharma and the suppression of its opposite. How could He, the Proclaimer, Establisher and Defender of the norms of Dharma, go counter to them by commerce with other men's wives? The Lord of the Yadus, He Who had no unfulfilled desire, did this hateful thing: what could have moved Him to do it? Be pleased to resolve the doubts that assail us, O Thou of the exemplary life' (27-29).

Sri Suka answered: There are known instances of transgression against Dharma and high-handed action on the part of the mighty; the all-powerful are no more to be blamed for such violations than fire for consuming all things. But on no account may one who is not master of circumstance even think of doing such a thing; should he do that in his folly, he would perish, as

¹ Most of the commentators, following S., apply the epithet 'bhinna - setuh' to the Lord also and render it as 'He who had flouted the norms of conduct'; but N. would render it as 'He Who broke the obstacles represented by the *jivas'* *karmas* to their attaining Him'. ² 'Doing the same thing to them.' This is how 'svayam' is interpreted by R. and J.

any one other than Rudra would have done, had he swallowed the poison from the ocean. What the supermen teach is the truth. What they do is only sometimes a true guide to conduct. The intelligent man should follow them only in those acts that are conformable to their teachings. In doing good acts, they are actuated by no self-interest, being free from the ego. And by doing the opposite, they cannot harm themselves. How then, could there be any question of good or evil issuing from the acts of Him Who rules all beings born to dependence, be they the lower orders of creation, or men, or gods? When even those that are supremely content, cleaving to the pollen of His lotus feet, and the sages who have severed all the bonds of *karma* by the power of knowledge, live just as they please, without falling into bondage again, how could there be bondage for Him Who had assumed a body of His own free will? He Who is in the Gopis, in their spouses, in all that lives, in fact, as the Witness and Inner Controller, chose in play to assume the form of a man and appear on earth. Taking a human body to bestow His grace on all creatures, He plays His play, merely to hear of which is enough to make one His slave (30-37).

Actually, the men of Vraja were not angry with Krishna; bemused by His Power of *Māyā*, they imagined that their wives were by their side all the time. At the Brāhmic hour, the Gopis, to whom the Lord was infinitely dear, went home unwillingly, sustained by Vāsudeva's approval. He who listens to, or himself relates with faith this tale of Vishnu's sport with the belles of Vraja will develop supreme devotion to the Lord, and that will quickly fortify him with the strength of will which delivers men from passion, the heart's malady (38-40).

CHAPTER XXXIV

SUDARSANA FREED, SANKACHŪDA SLAIN

Sri Suka said: Once the Gopas went to Ambikāyaṇam in their ox-drawn carts, eager to attend the temple festival. Bathing in the Sarasvatī there, they devoutly worshipped God Paśupati and the Goddess Ambikā

with rich offerings, O King. And with all zeal they made gifts of cows, clothes and tasty food with honey to Brahmanas, with the prayer, 'May the Lord be propitious to us.' The fortunate Nanda, Sunanda and the rest, staunch in their vows, passed the night on the bank of the Sarasvati, fasting on water. As Nanda lay in the wood, a great python chanced upon him there, and being extremely hungry, opened its mouth and seized him. Caught by the serpent, he cried out, 'Krishna, O Krishna !' The cowherds sprang up on hearing his cries ; they were dismayed to see him in the grip of the serpent, and they attacked it with burning brands. But, though they burnt it with the brands, the snake would not let go. Just then, the exalted Lord, Master of the Sātvatas, came there and touched it with His foot. Thereupon it discarded its serpent body, its sins destroyed by the touch of the blessed foot of the Lord, and assumed a form that was the object of reverence to Vidyādhara (1-9).

When he, who wore a garland of gold, prostrated himself before Him with that shining body of his, He asked him, 'Who may you be, sir, who look so radiant ? Your appearance is marvellous. What brought you to this horrid state, compelling you to submit helplessly ?' He replied, 'I am a Vidyādhara known as Sudarśana. Being endowed with wealth and good looks, I used to roam at will all over the world in my aerial car. I was so proud of my beauty that I laughed at some sages of the Angiras family who were ugly. For my sin, those whom I had derided made me take this birth. The curse that those compassionate souls laid on me has been a blessing to me; by reason of it, I have received the touch of the foot of the Lord of the universe, and been cleansed of my sin. Being released from the curse by the touch of Thy foot, let me, O Destroyer of woes, take leave of Thee That savest from the terrors of endless birth and death those who take refuge in Thee. I surrender myself into Thy hands, O Master-yogi, Mighty Lord and Protector of the good; give me leave to depart, O Lord Paramount over all Powers and potentates. A glimpse of Thy face instantly freed me from the punishment imposed by the Brahmanas, O Achyuta. When a

man, by uttering Thy name, can at once purify, not only himself but all else who might happen to hear him, how much more easy should it be for one who has been touched by Thy foot, to be cleansed of his sin ? ' (10-17).

Taking leave of the Dāsārha and walking reverently round Him, Sudarśana went to heaven, and Nanda was saved from peril. Seeing for themselves that inherent power of Krishna, the people of Vraja were filled with wonder. After due fulfilment of their vows, they returned to Vraja, speaking with great fervour of what they had seen, O King. One day, sometime later, Govinda, and Rama of the marvellous exploits, were sporting in the forest at night with the young women of Vraja. While the women, who were staunch in their affection, celebrated them in sweet songs, the two brothers, well adorned, perfumed with unguents, wearing wreaths and spotlessly clean clothes, appropriately welcomed the onset of night, when the moon and stars had risen and the bees were drunk with the scent of jasmine, and the wind came laden with the fragrance of lilies, by elaborating musical modes in concert and rejoicing the minds and ears of all creatures. The Gopis, hearing that song, were filled with such self-forgetful ecstasy that they were not conscious of their garments coming loose or of their chaplets having slipped down from their hair, O King (18-24).

As they were thus sporting without a care and singing like mad, a retainer of the Lord of Wealth known as Sankachūda came there. Under their very eyes he fearlessly drove towards the north the crying women who looked to them for protection. On hearing their women wailing, like cows being driven off by a robber¹, and calling out, ' O Krishna, O Rama ! ' the brothers sprang forward in pursuit. Shouting to them reassuringly, ' Do not be afraid, ' they, armed with pine trees, swiftly closed in on the fleeing Guhyaka blackguard. Seeing them at his heels like destroyer time and death, the fool was terrified ; abandoning the women, he fled for dear life. Govinda pursued him wherever he went, determined to get his crest-jewel ; while Rama stayed behind, guarding the women. Overtaking him before he had gone far,

¹ 'Dasyu' is taken by S. as standing for 'tiger' here, but others give the ordinary meaning of 'robber', here adopted.

the Lord struck off with His fist the head of the wicked fellow with the crest-jewel on it. Slaying Śankachūda in this manner and seizing the dazzling gem, He gave it affectionately to His elder brother in the presence of the women (25-32).

CHAPTER XXXV

THE SONG OF THE LORD'S PASTIMES

Śrī Sūka said: When Krishna was away in the forest, the Gopis, their hearts melting with love for Him, passed the day with great difficulty, singing His pastimes.

The Gopis said* :

Ah, Gopis ! when Mukunda plays the flute
 With left cheek resting on the left arm's base,
 His eyebrows dancing as the fingers soft
 Glide on the stops of the flute at His lips,
 The wives of Siddha riders in the air
 Hear with their spouses, and are amazed ;
 Then, yielding their hearts to the darts of Love,
 They swoon in shame, their waist-bands all forgot.

And now for a marvellous thing, my dears :
 When Nanda's son, with laughter garland-bright
 And that unflitting¹ lightning on His breast,
 Who to the sorrow-laden gaiety brings,
 Sounded His flute, the cows, the bulls and deer
 Of Vraja stood in groups, their hearts ravished
 By the far flute, their ears cocked, and grass
 Half-bit—asleep they seemed, or picture limned.

What time Mukunda in His wrestler's trim
 Of peacock plumes and tints and tender shoots,
 Calls to the cows, my love, playing the flute,
 With Bala and the cowherds by His side,
 The streams, they stand still then as though they
 craved

Dust from His lotus feet the wind might bring,

* Each verse in the translation renders two linked verses of the original.

¹ The paradoxical phrase 'unflitting lightning' refers to the Goddess Śrī who abides on Vishnu's breast in the form of a ray.

But luckless even as we, that bliss denied,
With loving, trembling hands their waters stay.

When, walking in the woods, His glory sung
By those who follow Him, His opulence
Secure like His¹ Who was ere aught else was,
His flute the cows that graze on hill-side calls,
The sylvan vines, so rich with fruit and flower,
Their loaded branches bent, the trees likewise,
Thrill ah ! with joy, and honey stream, as though
They would in themselves Vishnu manifest².

When He with lovely *tilak* mark adorned,
Puts to His lips the flute, by concord charmed³
With the high note of bees on honey drunk
Of basil sweet in sylvan garland blent,
Then swan and *sāras* and the feathered race
That haunt the lake, come there, their hearts
ravished
By music sweet, and there they sit alack !
Silent by Hari's side, eyes closed, minds stilled.

When, perched on mountain slope, with chaplet gay
And gladness in His heart, He joys the world
Resounding with the music of His flute,
O Vraja's dames, with Bala by His side,
The cloud that fears to out-strip the great
With gentle rumble does the flute support,
And raining flowers on its Friend, it holds
For sun-shade o'er His head its umbrage cool.

What time thy son, good dame⁴, so skilled in games
Dear to the herdsmen's hearts, applies the flute
To lips like *bimba* fruit and weaves new modes
By combinations, all His own, of notes,

¹ 'Ādi-pūruṣa': The Primordial Lord. ² By the abundance of fruit and flower and the streams of honey, the creepers and the trees are picturesquely described as seeking to manifest Vishnu Who pervades all that exists and is the Spirit of Bliss. ³ The high-pitched hum of the drunken bees invite the Lord to play on His flute, using it as a drone. ⁴ This stanza is supposed to be addressed to Yaśodā.

And takes them through the octaves three, the gods,
 By Śakra, Śarva, and Demiurge led,
 Incline their ears, but baffled, though adepts,
 Give up disheartened, head and mind abased.

When with the tusker's gait on Vraja earth
 He paces, and the pain of hooves allays,
 On lotus-petal feet with lovely marks
 Of flag and lotus, goad and thunderbolt,
 And sounds His flute, so fierce is love's onset
 His playful glance sends charging through our
 breasts
 That we are then like trees, too stupefied
 To know if it be vesture or but braid¹.

Sometimes the cows He reckoned by the gems
 Strung on a chain of precious stones He wore,
 And garlanded with fragrant basil sang,
 Resting His arm on friendly shoulder ; then
 The black buck's mates, beguiled by sound of flute,
 Hurried to Krishna, and with Krishna stayed,
 That ocean vast of noble traits ; the does
 Renouncing Gopi-like their love of home.

Bedecked in festive style with threaded blooms
 Of *kunda* played Thy child, O faultless one—
 Did Nanda's son His loves delighting play—
 Surrounded by the herdsmen and the kine
 On Jumnā's bank while pleasant zephyr blew,
 Showing his deep regard by gentle touch,
 And, like kings' bards, with music and with song
 And flowers the demigods their devoirs paid.

At eventide, collecting all the cows,
 He Who from love of Vraja and its kine
 The mountain bore, returns with tuneful flute,
 And friends who sing His praise; the Ancients² pay

¹ The words 'that has slipped' must be understood after 'braid', (says *Toshinī*), though the Gopis would not explicitly refer to this out of modesty. ² 'Ancient' is taken by S. to refer to the great Gods like Brahmā.

Their humble homage on the way, as He,
 The moon from Devakī's womb, comes home,
 His wreath with hoof-dust sprayed, and tired face
 That charms the eye, to grant His loved ones' wish.

With tipsy-rolling eyes and face that's pale
 Like *badri* plum, the gentle cheeks aglow
 With th' opulence of lovely ear-pendants,
 Here comes the Yadus' Lord with greeting warm
 For friends, and garland decked with forest plumes,
 And glad face like the moon that queens the night,
 With royal tusker's sport to free the folk
 And cows of Vraja from their daylong pain.

Srī Suka said : Thus, O King, did the women of Vraja wonderfully entertain themselves during the day, singing the pastimes of Krishna ; great was their rejoicing, for He was life of their life, and it was for Him that they lived (1-25).

CHAPTER XXXVI

ARISHTA, 'THE BULL', SLAIN

Srī Suka said : It was then that there came to the cowherd settlement Arishta, an Asura in the guise of a bull, with a huge body and hump. The earth, pitted by his hoof-marks, shook under his tread ; he tore the ground under him, bellowing harshly, and with staring eyes and tail high in the air, rooted earth-mounds with the tip of his horn, voiding a little excreta and urine every now and then. Terrified by the ear-splitting din he made, cows and women aborted, or were delivered prematurely, and clouds settled on his hump, my lord, mistaking it for a hill. When they saw him with his sharp horns, the Gopas and Gopis were filled with dread, and the cows fled in a panic from Gokulam, O King. Crying ' Krishna, O Krishna ! ' they sought Govinda's protection. The exalted Lord, seeing the entire settlement flying terror-stricken, calmed them with the words, ' Have no fears '. And He challenged Vṛshāsura, calling out to him, ' What do you gain by frightening the cows and their herdsmen, you wicked fool ? Here I am,

to put down the strength and pride of evil things like you '. So saying, and slapping His shoulders, enraging Arishta by the noise, Hari waited, His arm, resembling a serpent's body, resting on a companion's shoulder. Thus provoked, Arishta rushed in a rage upon Krishna, tearing the earth with his hooves, and scattering the clouds with his erect tail. With his sharp horns thrust forward, he charged instantly, like the thunderbolt launched by Indra, regarding Achyuta obliquely with the tail of his bloodshot, staring eye. Seizing him by the horns, the Lord pushed him back a distance of eighteen paces, as fighting elephants do each other. Thus thrown off by the Lord, he got up in a trice and charged again, mad with rage, breathing heavily, his body in a lather of sweat. Seizing him by the horns as he came, He threw him down, and planting His foot on his head, wrung his neck, as one rinses a wet cloth, and breaking off one of the horns belaboured him, and he fell; then vomiting blood, voiding dung and urine, kicking his legs convulsively and rolling his eyes, he died in agony. The gods extolled Hari, showering flowers on Him. Having thus dispatched the humped brute, He entered the cowbyre with Bala, His people praising Him, the Gopis feasting their eyes on Him (1-15).

When Arishta, the Asura, had been slain by Krishna of the marvellous exploits, the blessed Nārada, godlike in his prevision, told Kamsa that the girl child was Yaśodā's, that Krishna was Devaki's son, and that He and Rama, the son of Rohiṇi, had been placed by Vasudeva in his friend Nanda's keeping from fear, and it was they that had slain his men. When he heard that, the Lord of the Bhojas, all his senses reeling under a tempest of rage, snatched a sharp sword to kill Vasudeva. He was stopped by Nārada (who cautioned him). Recollecting that his death by his sons' hands had been prophesied, he put Vasudeva and his wife in chains (16-19).

When the celestial sage had departed, Kamsa despatched Keśi, telling him, ' Kill Rama and Keśava '. Then sending for Mushtika, Chāṇūra, Sala, Tosala and others, as well as officials and elephant-keepers, the King of the Bhojas told them, ' Listen, valiant Mushtika

and Chāṇūra, you know that in Nanda's cow-colony are living the sons of Ānakadundubhi, Rama and Krishna ; it has been shown to me that I shall die by their hands. When they come here, you must kill them in a wrestling match. Let different kinds of raised seats be placed around the ring. Let the citizenry and the rural folk see the wrestling bouts. And you, superintendent of the elephant stables, you are a clever man. Take the elephant Kuvalayāpīda and place it at the entrance to the grounds, and get it to kill my enemies. Let the 'sacrifice of the bow' be begun on the fourteenth day of the fortnight, according to the rules, and animals suitable for sacrifice be slaughtered in propitiation of the bounteous Lord¹ of all creatures' (20-26).

Having given these orders, he, who was well versed in statecraft, sent for the Yadu chief, Akrūra, and taking him by the hand said, 'O Dānapati, you must do me a friendly service. There is no one among the Bhojas and the Vṛshnis who is more devoted to my interests or solicitous of my welfare. So I have resorted to you, my friend, for the fruition of my great purpose, even as the Lord Indra sought Vishnu's aid to achieve his. Go to Nanda's Vraja where the sons of Ānakadundubhi are living ; take this chariot and fetch them quick. You know that they have been appointed agents of my destruction by the gods, who are under Vishnu's protection. Bring them here, along with the Gopas, Nanda and others, bearing gifts. When they are here, I shall have them killed by an elephant which is the peer of Death. If they escape, I shall have them dispatched by wrestlers, who will strike with the quickness of lightning. And when Vasudeva and the rest are grieving for them, I shall have them slain, as well as their kinsmen of the Vṛshni, Bhoja and Daśārṇhaka clans, and also my father, the senile Ugrasena, who is still enamoured of the kingdom, his brother Devaka, and all others who are hostile to me. This kingdom will then be free from thorns, my friend. Jarāsandha is my honoured relative, Dvidida my loved companion ; Sambara, Naraka and Bāṇa are well affected to me. Having with their

¹ Bhūteśvara, the name by which Śiva, as the tutelar deity of Mathurā, was known.

aid killed the kings who take the side of the gods, I shall rule the earth. Now that you know my mind, go and fetch the boys Rama and Krishna quick, to see the worship of the bow and the splendours of the city of the Yadus' (27-37).

Akrūra told him, 'You have no doubt carefully considered what you should do to avert death, O King. But one should face with equanimity success and failure alike. For it is Providence that deals out the fruit. Man aspires high, though destiny might have decreed against him, and he reaps happiness or misery as it might chance. Be that as it may, I shall carry out your command'. Śrī Śuka said: Having thus instructed Akrūra, Kamsa sent away his ministers and retired, and Akrūra went home (38-40).

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE DESTRUCTION OF KESI AND VYOMA

Śrī Śuka said: Meanwhile Keśi, who had been sent by Kamsa, came in the guise of a powerful steed, swift as the mind, tearing the earth with his hooves, filling the sky with the tumult of clouds and aerial cars scattered by his mane, and terrifying all creatures with his neighing. When He saw him scaring his cow-colony with that frightful neighing, dispersing the clouds with the brush of his tail, and looking for Him to engage him in a fight, the Lord stepped forward and challenged him; whereupon he roared like the lion. The moment he saw Him, he rushed upon him with gaping mouth as if he would drink up the sky. Unapproachable and inescapable because of his terrific speed, he struck out at the Lord of the lotus eyes with his legs in a great rage. Dodging the blow, Adhokshaja in His wrath seized him by the legs and whirled him round and round, then contemptuously flung him a distance of a hundred bow-lengths, as the son of Tārکشya might a snake, and waited. Regaining consciousness, he got up in a frenzy of fury and made a rush at Hari, his mouth wide open. And He, laughing, thrust his right arm into his mouth, like a snake slipping into its hole. Keśi's teeth, fastening on the arm of the Lord, dropped as if they had touched

red-hot iron. And the arm of the mighty Lord grew apace inside his mouth, like a disease¹ when neglected. His breath blocked by Krishna's swelling arm, he fell down and kicked his legs convulsively, his body bathed in sweat and his eyes rolling; and voiding dung, he died. He of the mighty arm withdrew His arm from the body of the dead horse, that had split² open from end to end like the ripe *karkati* fruit. Having killed his enemy without an effort, He did not make a vaunt of it, when the smiling gods extolled Him, showering flowers upon Him (1-8).

The divine sage (Nārada), foremost of the devotees of the Lord, came to Krishna of the tireless energy, and spoke to Him in private, O King. He said, ' Krishna, O Krishna of the limitless greatness and unimaginable prowess, Ruler of all the worlds, O Vāsudeva, Support of all that exists, O Foremost of the Sātvatas, All-powerful Lord, Thou art the One Soul present in all creatures, like the one fire implicit in all logs of wood. Thou art the Secret Dweller in the cave, the Seer and Supreme Ruler, Almighty Spirit. Thou Thyself, having first created, of Thy free will, and depending on nought else, the *guṇas* by Thy Power of Māyā, effectest, with them for instruments, by an act of will the creation, destruction and preservation of the universe. Thou art thus Lord Paramount over all creation. Thou art incarnate for the destruction of the Asuras, Pramathas and Rākshasas who, born into this world, are now kings, and for the safeguarding of the bulwarks of Dharma. Heaven be praised, Thou hast slain, as if it were child's play, this Asura in the guise of a horse, whose neighing frightened the gods out of heaven (9-14).

The day after tomorrow I shall see Chāṇūra, Mush-tika and other wrestlers, the elephant, and Kamsa killed by Thee, Omnipresent Lord. Thereafter I shall witness the slaying of the demon with the conch-shell, the Yavana, Mura and Naraka, and the carrying off of the *Pārijāta* tree, and the victory over Indra. I shall see Thee wed the daughters of valiant kings obtained for the

¹ dropsy (S.) ² "had...end": The text merely says that the body 'looked like the *karkati* fruit': It is S.'s elaboration that the translation follows.

bride-price of valour, and the freeing of Nṛga at Dvārakā from the penalty for sin, O Master of the worlds. I shall see Thee accepting the Syamantaka gem with a wife, and bringing back from Thine own abode and restoring to the Brahmana his dead son revived. I shall see the slaying of Paundraka, and the burning of the city of Kāśī that will follow, and the slaying of Dantavakra and of the King of Chedi at the great sacrifice. And I shall see the many other marvellous things, fit to be sung on earth by the poets of all time, that Thou shalt do, living in Dvārakā. Then I shall see Thee as Time, the Destroyer, annihilating all the armies, from the desire to dissipate¹ the burden of the earth, while serving as Arjuna's charioteer. We take refuge in Thee, O Lord of the unsurpassed puissance, That art *ĵnāna* incarnate and established in Thine own Self, That knowest no lack, That willest what shall be, Thyself eternally immune, by reason of Thy Power of Intelligence, from the perpetual flux of the *guṇas* caused by Māyā. I make my salutations to Thee That controllest all, being Thyself self-dependent, That producest by Thy Power of Māyā all the phenomenal world of difference, and hast now assumed a human body to play Thy play, as the foremost of the Vṛṣṇis, Yadus and Sātvatas' (15-23).

Srī Suka said : The sage, first of the devotees of the Lord, having made his obeisance to Krishna, Lord of the Yadus, and feasted his eyes on Him, departed with His leave. And the Lord Govinda, having killed Keśi in the fight, looked after the cows with the herdsmen who loved Him, and made Vraja happy. Once the herdsmen, grazing the cows on the mountain-side, played at hide-and-seek, impersonating thieves and shepherds. Some took the role of thieves, others of shepherds, and yet others of rams, and they enjoyed themselves hugely, having no cause for fear. Vyoma, son of Maya, and a great wizard, who had joined them disguised as a herdsman, carried off, in the role of thief, many a 'ram'—thrusting every one of them into a mountain cave, the entrance to which he blocked with a rock—till only four or five were left. Seeing what he was doing, Krishna, the Refuge of the good, pounced upon him in the act of

¹ (alt.) 'to destroy the world' (S.)

carrying off the herdsmen, as the lion seizes the wolf. Resuming his true form, mountainous in size, the powerful creature sought in vain to free himself from Krishna's grip, being in dire distress under his stranglehold. Seizing him with both hands and throwing him down on the ground, Krishna throttled him, as the gods looked on. Breaking through the rock that blocked the entrance to the cave, He released the cowherds in straits, and returned to His own byre as the gods and the herdsmen extolled Him (24-33).

CHAPTER XXXVIII

AKRŪRA COMES TO GOKULAM

Sri Suka said: The sagacious Akrūra, having spent the night in the city of the Madhus, set out for Nanda's Gokulam in his chariot. The fortunate man, who had come to love the Lord of the lotus eyes with a supreme love, was lost in reverie as he went on his way. 'What good did I do, what rigorous austerities did I practise, what gifts did I make to the deserving, by reason of which I, even I, shall be seeing Keśava today? I should have thought that it would be as difficult for me, engrossed in the objects of the senses, to obtain a glimpse of the illustrious Lord as it is for one born of a Sūdra to gain the right to utter the Veda. But no, I see that even to me, the lowest of the low, might be vouchsafed sight of Achyuta, since among those that are swept along by the river of time, some one does occasionally reach the other shore. The evil has departed from me, and this day my life has borne fruit; for I shall be saluting the Lord's lotus feet, on which the yogis meditate. Ah, Kamsa has conferred on me a supreme favour; it is because he has sent me that I shall be able to gaze on the lotus feet of the incarnate Hari, by the effulgence of Whose toe-nails others were helped in days gone by to pass through the impenetrable darkness (of *samsāra*)—those feet that are worshipped by the gods with Brahmā and Bhava at their head, by the Goddess Sri, and by the sages and the devotees, those feet that roam the forest, grazing cows in the company of His followers, and are marked by the saffron from the Gopis' breasts. I shall

assuredly see Mukūnda's face framed in its curls, with the lovely cheeks and shapely nose, and eyes like the red lotus with the smile in them, for I see the deer move from left to right of me. Should I be granted a glimpse of the charming figure of Vishnu, Who of His own free will has come as man to remove the burden of the earth, my eyes will have effortlessly gained their reward. He Who is devoid of the ego, though He creates the world of causes and effects by a mere look; Who, eternally intuiting the Self, is free from nescience, the sense of difference, and the loves and hates caused by delusion; Who, yet, seems addicted to house and home, finding delight there in the company of the *jīvas*, who have, by His will, been created within Himself by His own Power of Māyā, endowed with the organs of sense and action and the mind; Whose noble qualities, exploits and incarnations, dispelling all sins and producing all that is good and auspicious, invest the utterances that celebrate them with the power of sustaining, adorning and purifying the world, while those words, however eloquent, which do not touch upon them are looked upon as no better than decoration lavished on a corpse—He, the self-same Supreme Lord, is now incarnate in the Sātvata clan, to bring happiness to the great gods who safeguard the norms of Dharma that He has established, and He lives in Vraja, spreading His glory, which blesses all the world, and which the gods celebrate. And Him, the Goal of the saintly, and their Guru, Whose gracious figure attracts the exclusive love of all the three worlds, and is a glorious feast for the eyes of those that have eyes to see, and the coveted Home of the Goddess Śrī, Him I shall assuredly see this day; truly auspicious have been these many dawns for me. And I shall instantly get off the chariot, and fall directly at the feet of those two Supreme Personalities, which even yogis intent on Self-realization can only contemplate in their minds; and I shall also make my prostrations to their mates, the forest-dwellers (1-15).

'The Lord will surely lay His lotus hand on my head as I fall at His feet, the hand that offers sanctuary to those that seek its protection, terrified by the lightning attack of the serpent time; the hand in which Indra and

Bali reverently placed a gift and won lordship of the three worlds ; the hand with the fragrance of the *saugandhika* flower, which dissipated by a touch the fatigue of the women of Vraja when He sported with them. Though I have been sent by Kamsa and carry his message, Achyuta will not look upon me as an enemy, since He, omniscient Inner Ruler in all beings, sees clearly what is in their hearts, as well as what is outside. If He vouchsafe me a smile and a glance from eyes that are moist with compassion, as I stand humbly in His presence with joined palms, I shall be in bliss, all my sins fallen away, all my fears allayed. And when He throws His great arms about me, His sincere friend and kinsman, one who knows no other god, my body will become thrice-pure, and the bonds of *karma* will drop from it sundered. And I shall have realized the supreme end of life when He of the far-flung fame calls me, 'Akrūra, O father !' as I, having received His embrace, stand before Him humbly with clasped hands. How shameful the life of him for whom the Great One has no regard ! He has no loves and hates ; He looks on no one as His well-wisher or enemy, or as one who does not matter to Him. But as His devotees love Him, so He loves them, even as the celestial wishing tree fulfils the wishes of those that seek its favour. And His elder brother, foremost of the Yadus, will embrace me with a smile as I stand before Him with bowed head, and taking my joined palms in His, lead me inside the house, and lavish princely hospitality on me and then perhaps question me about Kamsa's dealings with his own relations' (16-23).

 Sri Suka said : While thus Svaphalka's son, going on his way, was lost in his thoughts of Krishna, the chariot reached Gokulam, and the sun disappeared behind the western mountain, O King. In the cowbyres, he saw the footprints, which adorned the earth with their marks of lotus, barley corn, goad and the rest, of Him, the purifying dust from Whose feet the Guardians of the worlds receive on their crowns. His excitement roused to fever-pitch by the joy the sight brought him, the hair on his body standing on end, his eyes blurred by tears, he jumped down from the chariot and rolled in the dust, crying, 'Ah ! This is the dust which the feet of the

Lord have trod'. Life can have no higher fulfilment for mortal born than what Akrūra knew from the moment he was entrusted with the message; when, with a heart free from hypocrisy, fear and grief, he saw and heard all that reminded him of Hari (24-27).

He beheld Krishna and Rama in Vraja at the place where the cows were milked; one clad in yellow, the other in sable silks, and with eyes like the autumn lotus; now in the first flush of youth, one dark, the other fair, and looking like the very Home of Śrī, with their long and sturdy arms and serene faces and their peerless beauty; moving like young tuskers and adorning the grounds of Vraja with their footprints, which showed the marks of flagstaff, thunderbolt, goad and lotus; mighty of build, and with compassion in their smiling glance; magnificent and captivating in their very playfulness; clad in spotless raiment after their bath, adorned with wreaths and garlands of wild flowers, and perfumed with delicious scents. He saw them, Who were Pradhāna and Puruṣa, the First Cause and the Protector of the universe, and were now incarnate with fractions of themselves as Bala and Keśava for the sake of the earth; they dispelled the darkness of the quarters, O King, by their own splendour, like emerald and silver mountains veined with gold (28-33).

Jumping down from his chariot instantly, Akrūra threw himself down at the feet of Rama and Krishna like a rod, his heart in a tumult of love. His eyes suffused with tears of joy at the sight of the Lord, his body thrilling with the ardour of love, he could not announce himself, O King. The Lord, Who loves the humble, understood what was passing through his mind, and drew him to Himself with the hands that bore the mark of the discus, and embraced him, greatly pleased. And the large-hearted Sankarṣaṇa embraced him too, as he stood before them with bowed head; and taking his joined palms between His own, He with His younger brother led him inside the house. Bidding him welcome and offering him the seat of honour. He bathed his feet according to custom, and brought and placed before him offerings made in *Madhuparka*. Making the ceremonial offer of a cow to the guest, the Lord

lovingly massaged his limbs, since he was tired, and had pure and tasty food set before him. When he had eaten, Rama, who was well versed in the duties¹ owed to the guest, made him happy with the offering of spices to sweeten the breath, scents and flowers. When he had thus been shown all hospitality, Nanda asked, 'How do you manage to exist, O Dāsārha, with the cruel Kamsa alive, like sheep consigned to the protection of the butcher? But why ask about the welfare of you people, subjects of the wicked man who so desperately clings to life that he could slaughter his own sister's babies while she wept?' Greeted with such sincere and kindly words by Nanda, and questioned about their welfare, Akrūra felt already relieved of the fatigue of the journey². (34-43)

CHAPTER XXXIX AKRŪRA'S VISION

Srī Suka said: Seated comfortably on a couch, and treated with signal honour by Rama and Krishna, he realized all the dreams that he had dreamed on the way. What is there that one cannot attain, when the exalted Lord, the Home of Srī, is pleased with one? But those who are wholly devoted to Him ask for nothing, O King. After the evening meal, the exalted Lord, the son of Devaki, questioned him about Kamsa's attitude towards His own well-wishers, and his intentions. The Lord said: 'Revered uncle, I hope you had a good journey. Are our friends, kinsmen and relations happy and well? But why do I ask about the welfare of our kinsmen and of his other subjects, my good sir, when Kamsa, that family disease whom we call uncle, grows stronger day by day! Alas! how greatly have my innocent parents suffered on account of me; because of me their children were killed, and they have been in duress. I am so glad that this day I have seen you, our kin, whom I have so long desired to see; tell me, uncle, why you have come' (1-7).

Srī Suka said: Thus questioned by the Lord, that

¹ (*lit.*) 'the highest Dharma'. ² (*alt.*) 'The travail of the transmigratory life' (S.).

scion of the Madhus related everything—Kamsa's lasting enmity to the Yadus, his attempts to kill Vasudeva, the message he himself had brought, and the real reason why he had been sent, as well as the fact that Nārada had revealed to Kamsa that he (Krishna) was the son of Ānakadundubhi. When they heard what Akrūra said, Krishna and Bala, destroyer of the enemy hosts, laughed aloud; and they impressed upon their father Nanda the King's command. And he told the Gopas, 'Collect all the milk products available. Take valuable presents for the King, and yoke the carts. We shall leave for the city of the Madhus tomorrow, make our presents of ghee and other things to the King, and see the great festival; all the people of the realm will be there.' Nanda had these orders proclaimed in Gokulam by the captain of the guards (8-12).

The Gopis, when they thus came to know that Akrūra had come to Vraja to take Rama and Krishna to the city, were in anguish. The sighs that rose from the fevered heart on hearing that made some of those lovely faces wan. The clothes and bracelets and hair-ribbons of others came loose. Yet others were so completely absorbed in their thoughts of Krishna that all their faculties were numbed and they were as oblivious of the body as those who have attained the Self. Some of those women fainted, recalling Sauri's heart-warming talk, full of lovely words spoken with a loving smile. As they dwelt in their minds on Mukunda's graceful carriage, His endearing gestures, His affectionate laughter and look, His jests that drove away melancholy, and His prodigious exploits, there came upon them a great fear; grieving at the thought of being parted from Him, they gathered in groups with tearful faces, and with hearts intent on Achyuta, thus lamented (12-18).

The Gopis said: 'Ah, Creator, how could you, having brought mortals close to each other in amity and affection, be so pitiless as to separate them before they could have their dearest wish? It is meaningless, this childish prank you play on them. Having allowed us but a bare glimpse of Mukunda's face in its frame of black curls, with the lovely cheeks and lofty nose, charming the beholder with the sly smile that banishes grief,

you hide it from us ; that is very wrong of you. You are being cruel ; for it is you, without a doubt, who under the name of Akrūra¹ are taking away the eye that you yourself gave us, not knowing what you do ; that eye² which revealed to us, lavished on a stray feature of the Foe of Madhu, all your skill in creation. Alas ! the son of Nanda, fickle in His affections, discovering a new love every day, has no consideration for us, who, powerless to resist His wiles, discarded home and kin, spouse and children and forthwith became His slaves. This day has dawned luckily for the women of the city, who will have their wish when the master of Vraja is with them and they drink in with their eyes that face which intoxicates like wine, with the smile breaking out at the corners of the eyes. Ah ! my dears, how could Mukunda, brave though He be, and obedient³ to His elders, be expected to come back to us rustics, when He has fallen under the spell of their words, sweet as honey, their coy smiles and coquettish ways ? Today the eyes of the Dāsārhas, Bhojas, Andhakas, Vṛshnis, and Sātvatas, as well as of those who see Him on the way, shall rejoice, looking at Devaki's son, the Darling of Śrī and the Home of all auspicious qualities (19-25).

‘The man who could do this pitiless thing should not be called Akrūra ; how cruel he is, taking Him, who is dearer to us than life,⁴ far away from us, without a word of consolation to us, stricken folk ! And *He* is so hard-hearted, He has already taken His seat in the chariot. And these Gopas are in a mad hurry to follow in their carts, while the old men are apathetic. Fate itself seems to be against us today. Let us go there in a body and prevent Mādhava's leaving. What can the elders of the clan and our relations do to us, who have plumbed the depths of misery, separated by fate from the company of Mukunda, which one cannot do without even for a fraction of a second ? O Gopis, how shall we bear

¹ There is a pun here, ‘Akrūra’ meaning ‘one who is not cruel.’ They say that Brahmā is guilty of the heinous sin of taking away what one has given. ² Sri Krishna is the ‘eye’, in that He has made the Gopis realize, by the matchless beauty of every one of His limbs and features, the extraordinary resources of Brahmā as a creator of beauty. ³ S. (*alt.*) though he has other relations in Vraja. ⁴ (*lit.*) ‘dearer than what is dear.’

the endless pain of separation, bereaved of Him, who out of His abundant love lavished on us in the Rāsa revels the tender smiles, delightful whispered messages, playful glances and warm embraces that made the nights pass like minutes? How shall we live without Him, Whose smiling sidelong glances take our hearts by storm when at nightfall He returns to Vraja playing the flute, His curly hair and chaplet powdered with hoof-dust, while Ananta walks by His side, and the herdsmen crowd round Him?' (26-30).

Srī Suka said: Talking thus, the women of Vraja, in their intense attachment to Krishna, wept aloud without shame, their hearts wrung by the grief of separation, crying 'Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!' While thus the women wept, Akrūra, having finished his ablutions at break of day, sped the chariot. The herdsmen with Nanda at their head followed him in their carts, taking with them ample presents and pots of ghee. The Gopis, following their darling Krishna, were somewhat cheered by certain encouraging signs, and waited in hopes of a favourable reply. Seeing them so unhappy at His departure, the foremost of the Yādus sent them a loving message saying, 'I shall be back soon'. As long as they could see the flag that the chariot carried, and the dust it raised, they stood like painted figures, having sent their hearts after Him. Then, despairing of Govinda's return, they turned back. Singing the deeds of the beloved, they shed their sorrows and passed the days. (31-37).

Meanwhile, the Lord, riding in that chariot, fleet as the wind, with Rama and Akrūra, reached the Kālindī, dispeller of sins. Purifying Himself, He drank of the sweet and crystal-clear water and returned with Rama to the chariot, which stood in the shade of a clump of trees. Having taken them back to the chariot, Akrūra with their leave got back to the pool in the Kālindī, and bathed after ablutions. When he took a plunge in the water, reciting the eternal Veda, he saw therein those two, Rama and Krishna, together. 'How could the sons of Ānakadundubhi, who were in the chariot, be here? Perhaps they are not in the chariot?' Thinking thus, he raised his head from the water and

looked. There they were, sitting as before. And he plunged again, wondering, 'Was it an illusion, my seeing them in the water?' And he now saw there in the water the Sovereign Lord of the great serpents, Whose praises were being sung by thousands of Siddhas, Chāraṇas, Gandharvas and Asuras with bowed heads—the God with a thousand hoods, and a crown on every one of them, clad in black, and fair as the lotus-stalk—established there like the white mountain (Kailāsa) with its peaks. And he beheld, seated on His lap, the Supreme Puruṣa, Deity Incarnate, with four arms, dark-blue as the rain-cloud, robed in yellow silks, radiating peace; with eyes of a warm red like the lotus petal; the face beautiful and gracious, with its charming look and smile, the lovely eyebrows and lofty nose, the delicately shaped ears, the glowing cheeks and ruddy lips; the stout arms held in repose, the high shoulders, and the breast, the Abode of the Goddess Śrī, the conch-shaped neck and deep navel, and the belly shaped like the peepul leaf, with its folds, the large and powerful hips and loins, and thighs like the elephant's trunk; the shapely knees supported on sturdy shanks, and the gracious lotus feet with the petal-soft toes, surrounded by the halo of raised ankles and pink toe-nails. Adorned with His crown, bracelets and armlets set with rows upon rows of priceless gems, with waist-band and sacred thread, chain and anklets and ear-pendants, the Lord dazzled all eyes. He held the lotus in one hand and the conch, the discus and the mace in the others. He had the Śrīvatsa mark on His breast and wore the scintillating Kausthubha gem and the garland of wild flowers. All the sinless souls—His own divine attendants, Sunanda, Nanda and the rest, Sanaka and the other celestial sages, the chief gods led by Brahmā and Rudra, the nine great Brahmanas, and the foremost of the devotees, chief of whom were Prahlāda, Nārada and Uparichara Vasu, sang His glory in words expressive of the unique feeling that each cherished. The Goddess of Prosperity, as well as those who preside over nourishment, eloquence, loveliness, fame and contentment, the Goddess of earth and the Goddess of energy, and those who rule over Avidyā (the knowledge that binds) and

Vidyā (the knowledge that liberates), His intrinsic Power of Intelligence, and Māyā and others were in attendance. As he gazed on Him, the heart of the scion of the Sātvatas was full of rejoicing ; he fell into an ecstasy of devotion, the hair on his body standing on end, his eyes moist with joy. Then, recovering himself somewhat, he, with bowed head and joined palms, and a collected mind, praised Him in words that came slowly, in a voice choked with emotion (38-57).

CHAPTER XL

AKRŪRA'S HYMN OF PRAISE

Akrūra said : ' I make my prostrations to Thee, the First Cause, the Supreme Lord without beginning or end, Narayana, from Whose navel sprang the lotus wherein appeared Brahmā, who made this world. Earth, water, fire, air, *ākāśa*, its source (the ego), the Mahat, Māyā, its begetter (the Purusha), the mind, the organs, the objects of the senses, and all the gods—all these, which bring the world into existence, are Thy subordinates. They, Māyā and the rest, being objects of perception, and thus material in nature, do not know the real nature of Thee, the Ātman or of themselves ; while the *jīva*, being enveloped in the *guṇas* of Māyā, cannot know Thee That art beyond their reach.¹ The yogis (and others)² worship Thee with scrupulous devotion as the Mahāpurusha, Witness of the workings of the bodily forces, the material conditions and the celestial influences, or as the Inner Ruler thereof. Some Brahmanas, who perform the fire-rites enjoined by the Vedas, offer elaborate sacrifices only for Thy propitiation, though, following the Vedic formulas, they invoke the names of gods with various forms. Others, the Jñānis, who have renounced all action and achieved tranquillity, worship Thee That art the very embodiment of Jñāna, in the act of contemplation. Yet others, who have Thee for the principal object of their

¹ By implication, the *jīva* knows his own nature and that of Māyā and other material entities (S.). ² These worshippers comprehend the followers of the Sāṅkhya as well as of Yoga. (S.)

adoration, and have been duly initiated, worship Thee in Thy one form as well as many manifestations, according to the mode of worship Thou hast Thyself laid down. Others, again, adore Thee, exalted Lord, in the form of Siva, following the revelation of Siva, as variously expounded by numerous Āchāryas.¹ It is Thee, the Supreme, that all worship, O Lord That art All-the-gods, even those that are attached to other gods and whose minds are wholly given to them. Just as all the streams that rise in a mountain and are swollen by the rains run down to the sea from various directions, even so do all paths in the end lead to Thee, O Lord (1-11).

‘Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are the *guṇas* of Thy Prakṛti. On them are strung all those, from Brahmā down to inanimate nature, that are limited by adjuncts derived from Prakṛti. Salutations to Thee That hast no attachments, being all that is, and the Illuminer of all intelligence. The eternal flux of the *guṇas*, being the result of ignorance of Thee, has power over those who identify themselves with the body, whether it be that of god, man or brute. Fire is Thy mouth, the earth Thy foot, the sun Thy eye, the sky Thy navel, the quarters Thy organ of hearing, the heavens Thy head, the great gods Thy arms, the oceans Thy belly, the wind-gods Thy breath and strength. It has been said that the trees and herbage are the hair on Thy body, the clouds the hair on Thy head, the mountains the bones and nails of Thee, the Transcendent, night and day the winking of Thine eyelids, Prajāpati Thy genitals, the rain Thy virility. The worlds, teeming with an infinity of lives, which are manifested along with their protectors in Thee, Imperishable Lord That art known only indirectly, through the activity of the mind, live and move and have their being in Thee like the minute organisms that breed on water, or the worms² in the fig. Merely by thinking on the forms That Thou takest to play Thy play in this world, men are wiped clean of sorrow, and they joyfully sing Thy praises. I make my salutations to Thee That camest on purpose as the Great Fish moving on the waters of the ocean

¹ Such as the teachers of the Pāśupata and Kāpālīka cults. ² The text has *maśakāḥ* (‘mosquitoes’).

at the Deluge ; That wert incarnate with the head of a horse to be the death of Madhu and Kaitabha ; That wert the Great Tortoise which bore on its back the Mandara mountain, and the Boar that found the lifting up of the earth good sport. I offer my salutations to Thee, the Wonder-lion, O Dispeller of the tribulations of the world of good men ; to Thee That wert Vāmana, Who bestrode the three worlds ; to Thee, That wert the Chief of the Bhṛguś, who cut down the forest of proud Kshattriyas, and the best of the Raghus, destroyer of Ravana. I make my prostrations to Thee, Lord of the Sātvatas, That art Vāsudeva and Sankar-*śaṇa*, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Salutations to Thee that, as Buddha the pure, shalt confound the Daityas and the Danavas, and as Kalki destroy the rulers of the earth, who will be mostly barbarians (12-22).

'The world, deluded by Thy Power of Māyā, wanders endlessly in the maze of *karma*, O Lord, obstinately clinging to the evil notion of ' Me ' and ' Mine '. I am myself lost in delusion, O Lord, over these things that are as unreal as dreams—the body, children, home, wife, wealth and kin—looking upon them as real. Taking what is transient, unreal, or painful, for the contrary of what it is, I delight in the pairs of opposites, because, enveloped in ignorance, I do not know Thee, the Soul's delight. As the fool, overlooking the water hidden by the things that grow in it, runs after the mirage, so I have turned my face away from Thee. Inclined¹ to sensual pleasures, I am unable to rein in the mind, agitated by desire and activity and dragged hither and thither by the violent senses. But even I have reached the shelter of Thy feet, which are beyond the reach of evil men, and I am certain that that was due to Thy grace being vouchsafed me, O Ruler of our hearts. When a man thus becomes fit for release from the transmigratory life, he devoutly waits on the good, and then his mind turns to Thee, O Lord of the lotus navel. Salutations to Thee, That art incarnate Intelligence, the source of all knowledge, the Controller of those who rule the life of the *jīva*, the Brahma of limit-

¹ This is S. 's rendering of 'kṛpaṇa-dhīh' (little-minded).

less puissance. Salutations to Thee That art Vāsudeva, and the Abode of all creatures, and Hṛshikeśa too. Save me, O Lord, I beseech Thy mercy' (23-30).

CHAPTER XLI

KRISHNA AND RAMA REACH MATHURĀ

Sri Suka said : While he was thus extolling Him, the exalted Lord Krishna, having shown Him His divine form in the water, withdraw it, like the actor the part he has played. When he found that the vision had disappeared, he emerged quickly from the water, and finishing the obligatory rites, reached the chariot, wondering. Hṛshikeśa asked him, 'Did you see any marvel on earth, in the sky or in the water? You look like one who had'. Akrūra answered, 'All marvels that are to be found on earth, in the sky or in the water, are in Thee, in Whom is the essence of the universe. What marvel, then, do I not see, who see Thee? Having before my eyes Thee in Whom are all marvels, what marvels could I see elsewhere—on earth, in the sky, or in the water, Almighty Lord?' Saying this, Gāndhīnī's son sped the chariot, and brought Rama and Krishna to Mathurā towards evening. The rural folk, who had gathered all along the way, were so delighted at seeing Vasudeva's sons that they could not take their eyes off them (1-7).

The people from Vraja, Nanda Gopa and the rest, having reached the woods on the outskirts of the city earlier, were waiting for them there. Joining them, the exalted and paramount Lord of the universe said to the deferential Akrūra with a beguiling laugh, as He took his hands in His, 'Please drive on to the city in advance, and go home; we shall rest here and see the city later' (8-10).

Akrūra replied, 'I will not enter Mathurā without both of you, O Lord. Thou shouldst not abandon me, my Master; I am Thy devotee, and Thou lovest Thy devotees. Come, let us go home with Thy elder brother, and Thy friends, and the herdsmen, O best of friends. Confer Thy servitude on us, O Adhokshaja. Sanctify with the dust of Thy feet the homes of us,

householders ; the water that has washed Thy feet is highly acceptable to the manes, the sacred fires and the gods. By bathing these feet, Bali not only became worthy of the highest praise, he achieved immeasurable power, and the goal of those that have single-minded devotion to the Lord. Those waters that had become holy by washing Thy feet purified the three worlds ; Śarva received them on His head ; and they took Sagara's sons to the regions of bliss. O God of gods, O Lord of the universe, O Thou Whose name, heard or uttered, sanctifies, O foremost of the Yadus, O Narayana of illustrious renown, salutations to Thee'. The Lord said : ' I shall come to your house, sir, with my revered elder brother, after having slain the enemy of the Yadu race ; then I shall do my friends' pleasure.' Śrī Suka said : Thus told by the Lord, Akrūra was rather unhappy. He entered the city, informed Kamsa of what he had done, and went home (11-18).

Then, in the last watch of the day, the Lord Krishna, accompanied by Sankarshana and attended by the Gopas, entered Mathurā, wishing to see the city. He beheld that city with its lofty gateways of crystal, its massive doors and portals of gold, its granaries built of copper and brass, and its impassable moat. It was beautiful with its outlying park-lands and flowering groves, golden crossways and mansions with their private gardens, its guild-halls and other habitations. It was filled with the sound of the crooning of doves and the cawing of peacocks from the balconies and the raised seats, the apertures of lattice windows and the mosaic terraces inlaid with cat's-eye and diamond, crystal and sapphire, coral, pearl and emerald. Its highways and shopping centres, its streets and courtyards were well-watered and strewn with flowers and tender shoots, puffed grain and unbroken rice. The house-fronts were decorated with full water-pots, sprinkled with curds and sandal paste, and adorned with strings of flowers and silk scarves, tender shoots and rows of lights, flanked by plantains and areca palms loaded with fruits and nuts, and hung with flags and festoons (19-23).

To see the sons of Vasudeva, who had entered the city with their friends by the royal way, its women assem-

bled in all haste ; in their excitement they climbed to the top of lofty mansions to look, O King. Some came wearing their clothes and ornaments all wrong ; others had put on only one ear-pendant, or one anklet, forgetting the other of the pair, or had applied kohl to only one eye, leaving the other without. Those who were eating left their food, in their unbounded joy ; others, who were being anointed with oil, did not stop to bathe. Some who had been sleeping woke up on hearing the noise and came out ; mothers who had been suckling their babies did likewise, setting down the infants. He of the lotus eyes, who walked with the gait of the royal tusker in rut, captivated their minds and provided a feast for their eyes with His bold playfulness, His laughter and His glances, and that body which is the delight of Śrī herself (24-27).

When they, who had heard so much of Him that their hearts had gone out to Him, saw Him and were made proud by being drenched with the nectar of His looks and smiles, they embraced in their hearts that Glorious Form, Bliss incarnate, taking it in through the eyes, and shed their pangs entirely, as their bodies thrilled in ecstasy, O subduer of the foe. The beautiful women, who had climbed to the top of many-storied mansions, rained down showers of flowers on Bala and Keśava, their lotus faces abloom with joy. All along the route the Brahmanas gladly received them with curds and unbroken rice, with full water-pots, wreaths and perfumes, fruits and other offerings. The citizens exclaimed, ' Ah, what rigorous austerities did the cowherd women practise, to have constantly before their eyes these two in whom all the world rejoices ! ' (28-31).

Meeting on the way a washerman who also dyed clothes, the elder brother of Gada begged him to give them the splendid laundered clothes that he was carrying. ' Give us those clothes, my good man, they are ideal wear for us, who are in every way worthy of them. If you give us them, you will meet with great good fortune, let me assure you.' Though thus requested by the Lord, Who knows no lack, that arrogant lackey of the King fell into a rage and taunted them, saying, ' You impudent beggars, who roam the mountains and

the forests, have you been wearing this kind of clothes all your life, that you should covet the King's property? Be off with you now, silly fellows. No man who wants to keep his head on his shoulders should make this kind of request. The King's men imprison, kill or seize the property of those who get above themselves.' When he thus railed at them, the son of Devakī in a rage struck off the washerman's head with the tips of His fingers. His underlings fled in all directions, abandoning the clothes-baskets, and Achyuta took the clothes. Krishna and Sankarshaṇa attired themselves in those that they fancied, gave others to the Gopas, and left some lying there (32-39).

Then a weaver, who took a liking to them, dressed them up in garments of variegated hues in a manner that became them exceedingly well. Bedecked in different ways, Rama and Krishna looked splendid, like two young tuskers, white and black, decorated for a festival. And the Lord, pleased with him, bestowed on him eternity in His own image after death, as well as abundance in this life, strength, power, memory and vigour. Then they proceeded to the house of Sudāmā, the florist. On seeing them, he got up and bowed to the ground. Fetching them seats and water to wash their feet, he honoured them and their companions, tendering the customary offerings, wreaths, *pan* and unguents. And he said, 'This day our life has become meaningful and our family has been sanctified, O Lord; the manes, the sages and the gods are pleased with me, because you have come. For you two are the ultimate Cause of all that is, and you are incarnate in this world with *amśas* of yourselves to secure its welfare and promote its prosperity. Being the well-wishers of all, and the Soul of the universe, and looking on all, as you do, with an equal eye, you have neither predilection nor prejudice, though you are responsive to devotion. I am your servant, I await your command; what shall I do for you? To be put to any task by you is to be supremely blest.' Saying this in all humility, and knowing what they had in mind, Sudāmā, with joy in his heart, gave them garlands of rare and fragrant flowers. When Krishna and Rama were thus adorned, and their followers

too, they, Lords of Bounty, were pleased with him; and they told him, who prostrated himself before them and besought their grace, to name any boon he chose. But he prayed only that he might be vouchsafed unwavering devotion to Him, the Soul of all, loving friendship for His devotees, and compassion for all beings. He granted him all this as well as strength, length of life, fame and splendour, and ever-increasing prosperity for his line. He then left the place together with His elder brother (40-52).

CHAPTER XLII

THE HUNCHBACK TRIVAKRĀ

Srī Suka said : Proceeding on the highway, Mādhava observed a young woman, a hunchback with a beautiful face, who was passing along carrying a vessel holding unguents. And He, Bestower of delight, asked her with a laugh, 'Who may you be, O damsel of the beautiful thighs? And for whom are these unguents, eh! Now tell us truly. Give us this rare perfume, and you will soon be favoured by fortune.' The woman attendant replied: 'I am a slave of Kamsa, named Trivakrā, O beautiful one, whom he prizes for my skill in preparing unguents. The Lord of the Bhojas greatly loves my preparations. Who can be more worthy of them than you two?' Enchanted with His beauty and delicate grace, His taste, His laughter and witty talk and bold glances, she gave both of them the thick (sandal) paste. And they were delighted; they looked splendid with that unguent which, being different in colour from their own complexions, shone the more, smeared over the upper part of their bodies, by serving as a foil to them (1-5).

Pleased with her, the Lord resolved to make the hunchback Trivakrā of the handsome face straight, showing the world how the mere sight of Him could bring its instant reward. Pressing down her forefeet with His feet, Achyuta straightened up her body with two uplifted fingers placed under the chin. Her torso becoming straight and even forthwith, she with her big hip and breasts was transformed into a lovely woman

under Mukunda's touch. Possessed of beauty, engaging traits and generosity, she fell in love with Keśava and said to Him with a smile, as she plucked at the end of His upper garment, 'Come, my hero, let us go home. I will not be parted from you. O lordly one, take pity on her whose heart you have stirred to the core.' Thus begged by the woman in Rama's presence, Krishna looked at Him and the Gopas who were with Him, and laughed as He told her, 'I shall come to your house, where men may find heart's ease, lovely one, when I have accomplished my purpose. You are the refuge of us, homeless wayfarers' (6-12).

Sending her away with such pleasing words, He went on His way. He was honoured with His elder brother by men in trade who brought them many presents, *pan*, garlands and scents. And the women were so agitated by love at sight of Him that they were oblivious of self, and stood like painted images, their clothes, fillets and bracelets slipping down. Enquiring of the citizens where the bow was kept, Achyuta went in and saw that bow, which was marvellously beautiful like the rainbow; being under worship, it was beautifully decorated, and many men guarded it. Repulsing attempts to prevent Him, Krishna seized the bow. Nonchalantly lifting it up with His left hand and stringing it in a trice, He of the mighty strides drew it to its full length, as all men looked, and broke it in the middle, as the elephant in rut snaps the sugar-cane. The noise of the bow's breaking filled the sky, the upper air and the four quarters. When he heard that, a great fear came upon Kamsa. The enraged guards and their assistants, with murder in their hearts, wanted to seize Him, and they surrounded Him, shouting, 'Seize him, bind him!' Perceiving their evil intentions, Bala and Keśava were enraged; snatching the broken pieces of the bow, they slew them. Destroying the forces sent by Kamsa, they left the pavilion by the gateway and went round, seeing the sights of the opulent city and enjoying themselves. Struck by their marvellous might, their prowess and audacity, and their beauty, the people of the city thought they must be great gods. As they roamed about carefree, the sun set, and Krishna and Rama, accompanied by the Gopas,

returned to the carts. All that the Gopis, suffering from the pangs of separation at Mukunda's departure, had foretold about the joys in store for those who were to see Him in the city of the Madhus, came true, when these gazed on the transcendent loveliness of form of that jewel among men, which had made the Goddess of Grace covet it for her home, rejecting those who had vainly sought to gain her (13-24).

Their feet bathed, they took food with milk, and passed the night comfortably, knowing Kamsa's designs. But Kamsa in his terror kept long awake, having heard of the breaking of the bow, and the slaying of its guards and of the forces he had sent, which had seemed child's play to Govinda and Rama. Then, both waking and dreaming, the wicked man saw many evil portents which were the messengers of death. Thus he saw the reflection of his own body but without the head ; he saw the luminaries as double, though there was no cause for it ; he saw a hole in the shadow cast by his own body ; he could not hear the humming when the ear is stopped ; trees looked like gold ; he could not see the imprint of his own feet. And when he fell into a dream, he saw himself embraced by the dead, or riding an ass, or swallowing poison ; he saw himself go forth alone, garlanded with China roses, or smeared with oil, and stark naked. Seeing these and many other things like these, both dreaming and waking, he, who dreaded death, could not sleep for anguished care (25-31).

At dawn, when the sun had risen from the waters, Kamsa inaugurated the great fair and the wrestling bouts, O scion of the Kurus. The men who were in charge did the worship of the arena, *tūryas* and kettle-drums boomed, the galleries were decorated with wreaths and flags and festooned with cloth. The citizens and the rural folk, with the Brahmanas and the Kshattriyas at their head, disposed themselves on them comfortably ; and the subordinate rulers also took their seats. Kamsa, with agony in his heart, occupied the royal couch, attended by his ministers ; and the Governors of the Provinces were seated around him. As the *tūrya* drums beat out the high-pitched 'Malla' rhythm, the wrestlers, full of pride, and decked in all their finery, entered with

their coaches. Chānūra, Mushtika, Kūta, Sala and Tosala took their places in the ring in the highest spirits, keyed up by the lively music. Nanda Gopa and the rest, invitees of the King of the Bhojas, sat by themselves in a gallery, having made their presents (32-38).

CHAPTER XLIII

THE SLAYING OF THE ELEPHANT

Srī Suka said : Krishna and Rama, who had already purified themselves, heard the kettle-drums and the 'Malla' drum being played, O scorcher of the foe, and they went to see. On reaching the entrance to the wrestling grounds, Krishna saw the elephant Kuvala-yāpīda with the mahout on its back, stationed there. Drawing his clothes tight about Him and tying up His curls, Souri told the mahout in a voice of thunder, 'You mahout there, get out of the way quick, be off. If you do not, I shall dispatch you with your elephant to the abode of Death this minute'. Threatened thus, the mahout in a rage goaded the angered elephant, which looked like imminent death directed by the Reaper in person, to charge Krishna. The lordly elephant attacked Him, and caught Him in its trunk. Pummelling it with His fists, He slipped out of the trunk and dodged between the legs. Mad with rage, because it could not see Keśava, the animal managed to seize Him with the end of its trunk guided by the scent, but He wrested Himself free. Then seizing it by the tail, He dragged that exceedingly powerful animal a distance of twenty-five bow-lengths, as effortlessly as Suparṇa might drag a serpent. As it swung right or left, Achyuta pulled it the other way, and thus revolved with it, like the child with the calf that spins round and round when he drags it. Then He came face to face with the elephant, and slapped it and skipped round it, slipping away every time it had just touched him, thus causing it to fall again and again. Prancing about, He would fall down and quickly pick Himself up again. Thinking that He was down, the animal would jab with its tusks and violently hit the earth. Thus impeded in its movement, the great tusker was furious, and goaded by the elephant-keepers, it

hurled itself against Krishna in a frenzy of rage. The exalted Lord, the Slayer of Madhu, stopped it in its headlong onset by grabbing its trunk, and threw it down on the ground. Planting His foot playfully, like the lion, on the fallen brute, Hari pulled out its tusk and with it dispatched the elephant and its keepers (1-14).

Leaving the dead elephant, He entered, tusk in hand, With the tusk over His shoulder, His body bespattered with drops of blood and ichor, and beads of perspiration rising on the lotus face, He was an awe-inspiring sight. Attended by some of the herdsmen, Bala and Janārdana came into the arena, O King, armed with those excellent weapons, the elephant's tusks. As He entered with His elder brother, the wrestlers saw in Him a thunderbolt, the ordinary folk a prince of men, the women Love Incarnate, the Gopas one of their own, the wicked Kings of the earth their chastiser, the parents their little babe, the Lord of the Bhojas his Death, the ignorant a callow youth, the yogis¹ the Highest Reality, the Vṛshnis the Supreme Deity² (15-17).

When he saw Kuvalayāpida slain, and looked at the two, who seemed well-nigh invincible, Kamsa, bold man though he was, knew a great fear, O King. Fitted out like actors³ for splendid roles, in wonderful costumes, and wearing garlands and ornaments, those two of the mighty arm shone in the arena, overpowering the mind of the beholder by their magnificence. As the citizens and the people from the Provinces, seated in the galleries, gazed on those best of men, their eyes and faces beamed ecstatically. They seemed to devour them with their eyes and find no satiety, O King, drinking them in with their eyes, savouring them on their tongues, inhaling their fragrance, and embracing them with their arms. And they told each other all that they had seen or heard about them, as if put in mind of these by their good looks, noble qualities, amiability, and self-confidence. 'You must know that these are *amsās* of the exalted Lord, Hari-Narayana Himself, who are incarnate here on earth in Vasudeva's house. This one was born of Devaki

¹ 'yogi' may comprehend the 'jñāni' also. ² God, who is the exclusive object of loving devotion (prema-bhakti). ³ The comparison with actors is intended to bring out their fearlessness. (S).

and was taken to Gokulam, and there grew up in Nanda's house all these years, unknown to others. Pūtanā was led to her doom by Him, and the demon that came as a whirlwind; thus, too, were the twin *arjuna* trees, the Guhyaka, Keśi, Dhenuka and others of that sort destroyed. He rescued the cows and their herdsmen from the forest fire; He quelled the serpent Kāliya, and humbled Indra's pride; for a whole week He held up the great mountain on one hand and saved the cow-colony from squall and tempest and thunder. Looking at His ever-glad face with its laughing glances, the Gopis lightly passed through many a travail and found joy. They say that, under His protection, Yadu's race will become known far and wide and win prosperity, renown and greatness. This other is His elder brother, the gracious Rama of the lotus eyes, Who slew Pralamba, Vatsaka, Baka and others' (18-30).

While the people thus talked, and the drums boomed, Chāṇūra, addressing Krishna and Rama, said: "O son of Nanda and you, Rama, the King sent for you, desiring to see you, having heard that you are esteemed by men of valour and are skilled in wrestling. Subjects who do their King's pleasure in thought, word and deed, know prosperity; the opposite is the fate of those who do not. As everybody knows, the Gopas, from the time they begin herding calves, delight in the diversion of wrestling bouts as they graze their cattle in the forest. So, look here, you and we shall do the King's pleasure. By doing that, we shall be pleasing all creatures, since the king speaks for all' (31-35).

On hearing that, Krishna, who liked wrestling and welcomed the chance of playing, gave an answer suitable to the time and place. 'We are the subjects of the Lord of the Bhojas, and we are forest folk; we shall consider ourselves blest doing his will. We are boys, and we shall play with those of equal strength. Let the wrestlers be well matched, so that no sin may attach to the assembly, O wrestler.' Chāṇūra rejoined, 'You are no baby, nor tender stripling, you who killed in child's play, as it were, the tusker that had the strength of a thousand elephants; and Bala is in the van of strong men. Therefore you should fight with strong

men, there would be nothing unfair in it. Show your prowess, taking me on, O son of the Vṛshṇis, and let Mushtika engage Bala' (36-40).

CHAPTER XLIV

THE SLAYING OF KAMSA.

Srī Suka said : Having made up His mind, the Lord Madhusūdana closed in with Chāṇūra, and the son of Rohiṇī with Mushtika. Their hands and legs locked in combat, they tugged at each other with all their force, intent on winning. Their forearms, knees, heads and chests clashing and thumping, they close beset each other, as they wheeled and threw, squeezed and knocked down, advanced and retreated in quick succession. Throwing on his back the adversary who had crouched down, dragging him up to his feet, shaking him off, holding him down, they mercilessly punished each other, keen on victory (1-5).

Seeing that unequal combat, the women present came together and spoke among themselves, moved by compassion, O King. 'It is an outrageous failure of duty on the part of these counsellors of the King to countenance his witnessing this fight between mere boys and strong men. What comparison can there be between the wrestlers with mountainous bodies and limbs of an adamant hardness and these boys who are hardly more than children, with their exceedingly tender limbs? This assembly will be assuredly guilty of transgressing Dharma. One should not stay for a moment where unrighteousness raises its head. The wise man should keep off assemblies, bearing in mind the faults that members of such bodies are liable to ; for whoever fails to speak out the truth, or utters falsehood, or pretends ignorance, commits sin (6-10).

'Look at Krishna's lotus face covered with beads of perspiration, like the lotus covered with drops of water, as He darts round the foe. Don't you see Rama's face, with its copper-coloured eyes, glaring with angry laughter at Mushtika? How blest are the grounds of Vraja which the Primordial Lord, Whose feet are worshipped by the Lord of the Hills and by Ramā, walks disguised as

man, decked with beautiful wild flowers, as He grazes the cows, and sounds His flute, playing His play in the company of Bala ! What austerities did the Gopis practise, that they should drink in with their eyes the ever fresh beauty of His glorious form wherein all fame, opulence and lordship are lodged, that quintessential loveliness, unequalled and unexcelled, which requires no adventitious aid ? Fortunate indeed are the women of Vraja whose minds, firmly fixed on Him of the mighty strides, bring them the fruition of all desires, and who sing Him, with love in their hearts and tears choking their voices, whatever they might be doing at the moment—milking cows or husking grain, churning curds, plastering the floor with cowdung, swinging on swings, attending to crying infants, sprinkling or sweeping the house. Immense must be the store of merit those women have accumulated, who quickly come out of their houses on hearing Him play His flute as He leaves for the forest in the morning with the cows, and returns in the evening, and see Him as He passes along, with his smiling face and gracious look' (11-16).

When the women spoke thus, the exalted Lord Hari, the master-yogi, made up His mind to slay the foe, O Chief of the Bharatas. Hearing the words of the women, full of apprehensions, the parents suffered agonies in their love for their children, for they did not know their children's strength. Achyuta and the other man, and likewise Bala and Mushtika, tackled each other systematically according to the rules of the duel. Chāṇūra, his body broken by the buffeting, cruel as the strokes of the thunderbolt, that it received from every limb of the Lord, was again and again overcome with lassitude. But he picked himself up, and pouncing with the speed of a hawk, hit the Lord Vāsudeva on the chest with his doubled fists in a towering rage. No more shaken by the blows than an elephant struck with a garland, Hari lifted up Chāṇūra with both hands, and whirling him round and round, dashed him down on the ground, life extinct. He fell like the flagstaff of Indra, his hair streaming wildly, and his ornaments and garments were scattered on the floor. At the same moment Mushtika, receiving a mighty blow from the open palm

of Bala, the strong, at whom he had let fly with his fist, was in great distress ; he trembled violently, and vomiting blood, fell down dead like a tree uprooted by the wind. Then Kūta rushed upon him ; but Rama, first of hard hitters, contemptuously dispatched him with a careless blow from His left fist. As the same moment, Sala, his head smashed by a kick from Krishna's foot, and Tosalaka, his body split into two, both fell. When Chāṇūra, Mushtika, Kūta, Sala and Tosalaka had been slain, the other wrestlers ran for dear life. And the two drew their friends, the Gopas, towards them and played with them, and with their anklets tinkling, danced as the drums sounded. All the people assembled there, except Kamsa, rejoiced at the doings of Rama and Krishna, the great Brahmanas and all good men crying, ' Well done ! ' (17-30).

When his chief wrestlers had been slain and the rest had run away, the Lord of the Bhojas stopped the drums and said, ' Drive out of the city those scamps, the sons of Vasudeva, confiscate the wealth of the Gopas, and put in bonds that blockhead Nanda. As for the vile fool Vasudeva, kill him ; and also my father Ugrasena, who has gone over to the enemy, with all his following.' When Kamsa thus rampaged, the Imperishable was provoked to a great wrath. Lightly He sprang up and climbed in a trice on to the lofty couch. Seeing Him, his death, approaching, the bold man jumped up from his seat and snatched his sword and shield. As sword in hand he swiftly wheeled to right and left like a hawk in the sky, He Whose dread power none can withstand, seized him by main force like the son of Tārکشya grabbing a snake. Clutching him by the hair, as his crown slipped down, and hurling him down on the arena from his lofty couch, He of the lotus navel, Who is the support of the universe, and Who works His will in perfect freedom, jumped down on him. And, as all the world looked, He dragged him, who was already dead, on the ground, like the lion dragging an elephant. And there arose a great hubbub, O King, everybody shouting, ' Ah ! Ah ! ' Since he, going in dread of Him, had always had before his eyes the Omnipotent Lord armed with the discus, whatever he might be doing at the time—drinking or

speaking, walking, sleeping or breathing—he was now assimilated to that Glorious Form, which it is so hard for mortals to attain. His eight younger brothers, Kanka, Nyagrodha and the rest, rushed to the attack in a great rage, discharging their debt to their brother. As they advanced, impetuous and resolute, the son of Rohiṇī slew them with his *parigha*, as the lord of the jungle kills the beasts. The kettle-drums sounded in the sky, Brahmā, Iśa, and others whose power derives from Him, were delighted, and they showered Him with flowers and extolled Him, and the celestial nymphs danced (31-42).

Their women came there with tear-filled eyes, grieving over the death of their loved ones and beating their heads, O King. Embracing their lords, who lay on the hero's bed, the sorrowing women wept aloud, their eyes streaming. 'Alas, my lord, my beloved, O knower of Dharma, lord of compassion, fond husband, by your death we, your own, are undone, our homes and children are ruined. Bereaved of you, its master, this city has renounced all that is joyous and auspicious, and is lacklustre like us, O best of men. You cruelly wronged the innocent, and that brought you to this pass; how could any oppressor prosper? This is the Creator, Destroyer and Protector of all creatures. No one who despises Him will know happiness'. Śrī Suka said: Consoling the King's consorts, the Lord, Protector of the universe, had the customary last rites for the dead performed. Then, releasing their father and mother from confinement, Krishna and Rama prostrated themselves before them, lightly touching their feet with their heads. Having come to realize that they were the Paramount Lords of the universe, Devaki and Vasudeva did not embrace their sons, when they bowed to them, being afraid (43-57).

CHAPTER XLV

KRISHNA RECOVERS A DEAD CHILD

Śrī Suka said: The Lord, seeing that His parents had realized the truth about Him, did not wish to leave them in possession of that knowledge. So He cast on

them the spell of His Māyā that takes in all creatures. Going up to His parents with His elder brother, the Chief of the Sātvatas bowed down to them in all modesty, and making them happy by affectionately addressing them, 'O father ! O mother !' said, 'You two, never knew, O father, what your hearts constantly yearned for—the joys that other parents have of their children, as they grow up from infancy through boyhood to youth. And we, spited by destiny, could not live with you or know the joys that children who live in their parents' home and are petted by them know. No man can repay, even in a hundred years of life, the debt that he owes his parents for endowing him with this body, which is the source of all satisfactions, and nourishing it. The son who, though able, does not maintain them by his labour and wealth, will undoubtedly be compelled, when he is dead, to devour his own flesh. He who, being able, does not maintain his mother, old father, dutiful wife, infant son, teacher, the Brahmana, or one who throws himself on his bounty, is no better than dead, though he breathe. All these days, when we, going in constant fear of Kamsa, could not give you our devoted attention, are so many days wasted. Be pleased to forgive us, O father and mother, for not devoting ourselves to your service, since we were dependants, and oppressed by the enemy' (1-9).

Srī Suka said : Beguiled by those words of Hari, the Soul of the universe masquerading as man, they took Him on their laps, embraced Him and found joy. Trapped in the snare of love, and fallen under His spell, they drenched Him with their tears, O King, but did not utter a word, tears choking their throats. Having thus comforted His parents, the exalted Lord, the Son of Devaki, made His grandfather Ugrasena King of the Yadus. And he told him, 'We are yours to command, great King. By the curse of Yayāti, the descendants of Yadu may not sit on the throne. When they find that I am at your service, the gods and others will pay you tribute with bowed heads ; how much more readily, then, should others, the kings of men ?' Sending for all His kinsmen and relations of the Yadu, Vṛshṇi, Andhaka, Madhu, Dāsārha, Kukura and other clans from

all quarters of the earth whither they had fled in their fear of Kamsa, He, the Creator of the worlds, received them with all honour, and comforted them, who had languished in foreign parts, and giving them wealth to gladden their hearts, established them in their own houses. Freed from affliction by Krishna and Rama, their longings fulfilled, they led a happy life and found every satisfaction under the protection of Krishna and Sankarshana. They rejoiced, seeing every day the lotus face of Mukunda, which radiated joy with its gracious look and kindly smile. Constantly drinking in as they did the nectar of Mukunda's lotus face, even men of advanced years felt young again in their new strength and vigour (10-19).

Going up to Nanda, the exalted Lord, the Son of Devaki, and Sankarshana embraced him; and they said to him, great King, 'Father, both of you lavished your love on us, nourishing and dandling us; parents have greater love for their children than for their own selves. He is the true father, and she the true mother, who nourish, as if they were their own children, those whom their own people have abandoned from inability to rear or take care of them. Return to Vraja, father; when we have ensured the happiness of our well-wishers here, we shall come and see you, our own folk, whose love for us makes you grieve.' Comforting Nanda and the others from Vraja with such words, the Lord Achyuta saw to it that they were given with all respect presents of raiment, ornaments, metal utensils, and so on. Thus bidden farewell, the affectionate Nanda was overwhelmed; his eyes brimming with tears, he embraced them, and went back to Vraja with the Gopas (20-25).

Then the son of Sūra had the sacraments for the twice-born done for his sons in due form, O King, by his preceptor and the Brahmanas. Adorning them and showing them all honour, he made them gifts of cows with their calves, decorated with gold chains and silk scarves round their necks. Recalling the vow he had made at the time of birth of Krishna and Rama, to make gifts of cows, which Kamsa had unjustly appropriated, the great-hearted man now gave away those cows also. Having had the sacraments done for them, which gave

them the status of the twice-born, they, strict in their vows, were inducted by Garga, the family priest of the Yadus, into the life of the celibate student. The omniscient Lords of the universe, sole source of all knowledge, hid from the world, by behaving like ordinary men, the immaculate knowledge that was innate to them. Desiring to live as pupils in the household of a guru, they went to Sāṇḍipani, a native of Kāśī, who lived in Āvanti. Approaching him with all respect as ordained, they served him, reining in their senses, and showing him fervent devotion, as if he were God Himself, thus setting an example to others of blameless student life. Pleased with their pure-minded devotion, that best of Brahmanas, their teacher, taught them all the Vedas along with the ancillary sciences and the *upanishads*, the science of archery with its secret lore, the Dharma Sāstras, the science of Vedic exegesis, Logic, and Polity under its six heads. They, who were supreme above all other men, and from whom all knowledge derives, grasped everything on hearing it expounded once. Having mastered the sixty-four arts in as many days by continuous application, they induced their teacher to name his fee, O King (26-36).

Seeing their marvellous might and their superhuman intellectual powers, he in consultation with his wife desired them to recover a child of his that had died in the sea at Prabhāsa. Saying, 'It shall be done', those great charioteers of the limitless valour went by chariot to Prabhāsa and halted on the seashore for a moment. And the ocean, knowing who they were, honoured them with offerings. The Lord bade him, 'Quickly bring us the son of our teacher, the child who was swallowed up by a great wave'. The ocean informed Him, 'It was not I who carried him off, Lord Krishna; it was a great Asura, Panchajana, who lives under water in the form of a conch.' The Lord plunged into the water and killed the Asura, but could not find the child in his belly. Taking the conch-shell that had been produced from his body, He returned to the chariot. Going on to Samyamani, the favourite city of Yama, along with Him Who is armed with the plough, Janārdana blew on the conch-shell. Hearing

the blare of the conch, Yama, who subdues all creatures, gave them a great welcome and lovingly honoured them. And with bowed head he begged Krishna, Who abides in the hearts of all creatures, 'O Vishnu, sporting as a mortal, what can I do for you both?'. The Lord told him, 'Fetch me, in compliance with my command, the son of our teacher who was brought here by reason of his own *karma*.' Yama said, 'As you wish', and brought Him the child. And the Vṛshṇi chiefs delivered him to their teacher; and they told him, 'Please ask for anything else you wish'. Their teacher answered, 'You have both given abundantly, my child, by way of preceptor's fee. What could he want, who is the teacher of such as you? Go home, valiant ones, may you enjoy fame that purifies all who hear of it; may the Vedas you have learnt lose none of their freshness and vitality for you here or in the life here-after.' Given leave by their guru to depart, they returned riding their chariot, which had the speed of the wind and the rumble of thunder. Looking at Rama and Sankarshana, whom they had not seen for many days, their subjects rejoiced, like men who have recovered lost wealth (37-50).

CHAPTER XLVI

THE LORD'S MESSAGE TO THE GOPIS.

Srī Suka said: A chief of the Vṛshṇis and a minister, and the dearly loved companion of Krishna, was Uddhava, a man of outstanding intellect, and a direct disciple of Brhaspati. One day the Lord Hari, Who relieves the distress of suppliants, said to him, the best loved of His followers, who gave all his devotion to Him, as He took him by the hand, 'Go to Vraja, Uddhava, good friend, bringing joy to our parents; and dispel with My message the grief of the Gopis at parting from Me. They want Me with all the force of their minds; they look upon Me as the life of their life; for My sake, they have abjured all the ties of the flesh. And I cherish and sustain those who sacrifice for Me all the joys of this world and the next, and the Dharma of which they are the fruit. The mere thought that I, whom they love more than anything else, am far away from them, makes the women of

Gokulam fall into a swoon, overwhelmed by the turbulence of longing that separation brings, My friend. With great difficulty, My Gopis, who have given their lives into My hands, somehow manage to live, sustained by the message I left with them, promising to return' (1-6).

Śrī Suka said : Thus bidden, Uddhava respectfully received his Master's message for them, and went swiftly by chariot to Nanda's Gōkulam, O King. As the sun was setting, the gracious man, his chariot hidden by the dust raised by the hooves of the returning cattle, arrived at Nanda's Vraja, which resounded with the din of lust-filled bulls fighting among themselves for the cows in heat, and milch-cows bounding towards their young with the burden of their full udders. It was pleasant to see the white calves frisking about, and to hear the sound of milking with its cheerful noises, and the music of the flutes. The beautifully adorned Gopis, who were singing the great deeds of Bala and Krishna, and the Gopas, lit up the place with their brightness. Charming were the herdsmen's homes, in which the sacred fires, the sun, the guest, the cows, the Brahmanas, the manes of the departed, and the gods were being worshipped with incense and lights and garlands. All over Vraja the woods were in flower ; and everywhere was the loveliness of bee-hum and bird-note, and lotus-beds crowded with swans and Brahmany ducks (7-13).

Nanda came out to receive the visitor, Krishna's dearly loved follower ; he embraced him joyfully and honoured him, looking upon him as Vāsudeva Himself. When he was resting comfortably on a couch, having thrown off his fatigue with a massage, and taken food with milk, he eagerly questioned him. ' My good friend, O magnanimous one, is our comrade, Sūra's son, happy and well, being free and re-united with his children and other kin, and surrounded by friends ? The sinner Kamsa, who persecuted the peaceable Yadus, has, thanks to Heaven, been slain by his own misdeeds, along with his following. Does Krishna remember us—His mother, friends and playmates, the Gopas, Vraja, which looked up to him as its protector, the cows, Vṛndāvana, and the mountain ? Will Govinda come here at

least once to see His own folk? Then we shall look at that face with its shapely nose and those eyes with the lovely smile in them. We were saved by Krishna, the supremely mighty, from wind and rain and forest fire, from the bull and the serpent, from many a death from which there seemed no escape. As we recall Krishna's exploits, his playful sidelong glances, his laughter and his talk, all our work gets slack, my friend. And when we look at the rivers and the hills and the forest reaches, the playgrounds which Mukunda's feet had adorned, we lose ourselves wholly in thoughts of him. I am sure that Krishna and Rama are great gods who have come here to achieve the purpose of the gods, as Garga's profound words suggested. They slew Kamsa, who was endowed with the strength of ten thousand elephants, the two wrestlers and the lordly tusker, as the king of the beasts kills ordinary animals; it seemed child's play to them. He broke that bow, thrice nine spans in length, as the royal tusker snaps a stick, and on one hand he bore the mountain for seven days; and effortlessly killed Pralamba, Arishta, Dhenuka, Trināvarta, Baka and many other Asuras who had been victorious over gods and Asuras alike' (14-26).

Srī Suka said: Thus, as his mind harked back to one thing and another, Nanda, who doted on Krishna, was seized with an intolerable longing, and he was so agitated by the love that flooded his heart that he fell silent. And Yaśodā, listening to the tale of her child's doings, shed tears, as her breasts streamed from the love she bore him. Uddhava, seeing the unparalleled love that Nanda and Yaśodā had for the Lord Krishna, spoke to Nanda out of the gladness of his heart. Uddhava said, 'You two are assuredly worthy of praise above all men, O you who exalt others, since you entertain such love towards Narayana, the Master and Mentor of all the worlds. For these two, Rama and Mukunda, are the seed and the womb of the universe, Purusha and Pradhāna. They, the Primordial Ones, entering into all beings, control the *jīvas*, who are conditioned by their limiting adjuncts and are diverse in character. You two have given your boundless love to Him Who is the Soul in all things and the cause of them; to Narayana, the Mighty Soul,

Who has assumed a human body for His own purposes ; by fixing his pure mind on Whom the man who is at the point of death frees himself from the residual impressions of *karma*, and forthwith attains the supreme goal, with a form luminous as the sun¹, having won true knowledge of the Self. What then remains for you to do by way of meritorious deeds ? (27-33).

‘Achyuta will be coming to Vraja before long ; the exalted Lord, the Master of the Sātvatas, will rejoice the hearts of His parents. What Krishna promised you, when having slain Kamsa, the avowed enemy of all the Sātvatas, He waited on you in the arena, that He will assuredly do. Do not give way to dejection, blessed souls, you shall see Krishna very soon indeed. He is in the heart’s core of all creatures, like fire in the fuel. Being free from egotistic attachment, and looking on all with an equal eye, He regards no one as dear to Him, or as the reverse thereof ; as high, or low, or unequal. He knows neither mother nor father, neither wife nor child. To Him no-one is own, no-one alien. He has neither body nor birth. He has no *karma* to work out in this world. But in the spirit of play He assumes bodies² belonging to different orders of creation, for succouring the good. Though He is Himself unconditioned by the *guṇas*, He utilizes the *guṇas*, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The Lord, Who knows no birth and is beyond such notions as play, uses the *guṇas* and creates, protects and destroys. Just as, to one who has been spinning round and round, the world seems to whirl round him, so the *jīva*, by identifying himself with the mind, comes to regard himself as the doer, when it is the mind that is the doer. The Lord Hari is not the son of you two alone ; He, the omnipotent Lord, is the son of all. And He is, too, the soul, the father and the mother of them all, and the Ruler of their destinies. All that is seen or heard, all that was, is or ever shall be, everything stationary or moving, big or little—none of this can be truly said to exist independently of Achyuta. He is all, being the Supreme Reality’ (34-43).

As they, Nanda and the follower of Krishna, thus

¹ i.e. a form compact of pure sattva. ² As man (Rama), god (Vāmana), beast (the boar), and so on.

went on talking , the night came to an end, O King. The Gopis had got up and lit the lamps and worshipped the house-fronts, and were now churning the curd. They shone bright with the gems sparkling in the light and the many bracelets on the arms that worked the churn rope, their hips and breasts and garlands heaving, their cheeks glistening with the lustre of their ear-pendants, and their faces with the red saffron on them. The voices of the women of Vraja, as they sang aloud the glories of the Lord of the lotus eyes, blended with the sound of the churning, and mounted to heaven, expelling all that was evil in the four quarters. When the sun was up, the people of Vraja saw a golden chariot at Nanda's door and wondered whose it was. 'Is it Akrūra that has come, he who served Kamsa's purpose and took Krishna of the lotus eyes to the city of the Madhus? Having thus pleased his master, what does he now propose to do with us, to give him further satisfaction?' As the women were thus talking among themselves, Uddhava, having finished his morning ablutions, came forth to meet them (44-49).

CHAPTER XLVII

THE SONG OF THE BEE

Srī Suka said : On seeing that companion of Krishna, with his long arms and radiant lotus face and eyes like the fresh-blown lotus, who was clad in yellow silks and wore the lotus garland and the glittering ear-pendants set with gems, those women of the winning smiles asked each other, 'Who is this handsome man, attired and adorned just like Achyuta? Where does he come from, who has sent him?' And they eagerly crowded round him, who cleaved to the lotus feet of the illustrious Lord. Understanding that he carried a message from the Lord of Ramā, they welcomed him with bashful, smiling looks and engaging words, and when he had taken his seat spoke to him in all modesty with bowed heads. 'We know that you are the confidant of the Lord of the Yadus, and that you have been sent here by your Master to gratify His parents. We can think of nothing else in this cowherd settlement that He could possibly wish

to remember. Affection for one's own relations is a tie too strong for even the sage to sunder. The friendship given to others is always motivated ; it is merely simulated till the object in view is attained, like the affection of men for women or of bees for flowers. Courtesans desert the pauper, subjects the incompetent King, students the teacher who has taught them all that he knows, priests the sacrificer who has paid them their fees, birds the trees that have ceased bearing fruit, guests the house where they have fed, deer the forest burnt down by the forest fire, the paramour the loving woman whom he has had' (1-8).

Thus the Gopis questioned Uddhava, who had come to Vraja as Krishna's messenger. Having given themselves, body, mind and soul, to Govinda and cut themselves adrift from all worldly affairs, they sang the deeds of the Beloved, weeping without shame as they recalled one by one all that He had done in childhood and youth. Seeing a bee, one of them, her thoughts wholly intent on union with Krishna, addressed it thus ; fancifully regarding it as the messenger that the Beloved had sent.

Sang the Gopi¹ :

Thou shalt not touch our feet, O bee,
 Friend of the false-hearted,
 With whiskers saffron-dyed
 From garland pressed by rival breasts.
 Let the Madhus' Lord go wearing
 His proud loves' favour, so
 Yadus at court may laugh at Him
 Who employs such as thee.

The heady nectar of His lips
 He gave to us but once ;
 And then He left us as thou dost
 When thou hast sucked the flowers ;
 How, then, one wonders, Padmā still
 Could serve His lotus feet ?
 Cozened, I fear, by th'artful speech
 Of Him the sages praise !

¹ See Notes.

Why must thou sing so oft, O bee,
Before us, homeless ones,
The praises of the Yadus' Lord
We knew so well of yore?
Go, sing that song before the mates
Of Vijay's bosom friend;
His new-found loves, their breast-pangs eased,
Will amply requite thee.

Where shall we find in heaven or earth
Or in the nether world
Her whom with wrinkling brow and sly,
Soft smile He cannot fetch?
What matter we to Him, the dust
Of Whose feet Sri worships?
But 'Glorious,' surely, is his due,
Who for the wretched feels?

Now there! take thy head off my foot;
I know thee well enough,
Minion of Mukunda, schooled
To please with sweet nothings.
For Him we gave up son and spouse,
And hope of heaven too.
Vagrant, He left us; why should we
Make peace with Him again?

No fowler He, yet fowler-like
The ape king slew, and gashed,
Himself a loving woman's slave,
A woman passion-borne;
And having ate his food, He bound
King Bali like a crow.
No more of that Dark One's friendship—
But not to sing of Him!

A drop by chance imbibed of that
Nectar for the ear—
The tale of His descent on earth,
The way He played His play—
Then, 'scaped from thrall of opposites,
These birds, lowly and lost,
Came here to lead the beggar's life,
Sad home and kin forgot.

We took His wily words for truth,
 And that not once or twice,
 Fooled, like the black buck's silly mates
 By fowler's lulling song,
 And came, alack, to know, too late,
 The cruel pangs of love
 His nail-touch can inflict: envoy!
 Let's talk of something else.—

Friend of our true love, ah! has He,
 Our darling, sent thee back?
 What wilt thou have? tell me, dear,
 Thou hast our high regard.
 How wilt thou lead us hence to Him?
 For He is single never;
 With Him for aye dwells on His breast
 The Goddess Śrī, His bride.

And is He still in Madhu's town—
 O joy! our honoured Lord?
 Does He His father's home recall,
 And all His Gopa kin?
 And does He ever speak, O friend,
 Of us, His handmaids true?
 Ah! when will He lay on our heads
 The hand that's incense-sweet? (9-21).

Śrī Suka said: Uddhava, hearing those words, spoke to the Gopis, who yearned to see Krishna, soothing them with the words of cheer he brought from the loved One. Uddhava said: 'You are indeed blest, honoured dames, who have thus wholly surrendered your hearts to the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, and have won the reverence of all the world. Devotion to Krishna may indeed be engendered by the giving of gifts, the observance of vows, the practice of austerities, the offering of oblations in the fire, the discipline of *japa*, the study of the Vedas, the control of the self, and by various other means of achieving the highest good. But it is by supreme good fortune that the world has in you an example of a rare devotion to the exalted and illustrious Lord, which even the sages have not found it easy to equal; renouncing son and spouse, self, home and kindred, you have

chosen the supreme Lord Whom we know as Krishna. Under the stress of separation, you have achieved an all-absorbing love for Adhokshaja. It has been a priceless favour to me to be allowed to see that, blessed ones (23-28).

‘And now let me give you the message which I, who do the confidential work of my Master, have brought you from the loved One ; it should make you happy, gracious dames. The Lord says : “ You are never in truth separated from me, honoured ones, since I am all that exists. Just as the gross elements¹, *ākāśa*, air, fire, water and earth, enter into all creatures, so do I, being the support of the mind, the vital airs, the elements and the sense organs, and the *guṇas* (whose products these are). Using My power of *Māyā*, I, by my own volition, create Myself in Myself, and through Myself functioning as the elements, the sense-organs and the *guṇas*, and likewise sustain, and withdraw Myself. The *Ātman* is unsullied in its integrity, being of the nature of pure Consciousness, and thus distinct from and wholly unconnected with the *guṇas* ; though it appears variously in the states of deep sleep, dreaming and waking², which are really modes of the mind produced by *Māyā*. Just as the dreamer, on waking, dismisses his dream as unreal, so should a man vigilantly restrain the operations of the mind which, by hankering after the unreal objects of the senses, had saddled him with those senses. That, in the eyes of the wise, is the consummation of the discipline of the Veda, the yoga, and the science of discriminating wisdom, as well as of the life of renunciation, austerities, and the subduing of the senses, and the practice of truthfulness, even as the sea is the goal of all rivers (29-33).

“ If I, Who am dear to you, remain out of sight, it is only from the wish to make you think continually on Me, so that your minds might dwell with Me. The mind of woman does not take possession of her beloved and abide with him when he is close at hand and can be always seen, as it does when he is far away. Giving your minds, whole and undivided, and free from all

¹ (v.r.) ‘intellect’. ² And known in these states as *Viśva*, *Taijasa* and *Prājña*.

other preoccupations, to Me, and thinking constantly on Me, you shall attain Me before long. Those women, O blessed ones, who remained in Vraja and could not join Me when I diverted myself in the woods on those nights, attained Me instantly, meditating on My pastimes" (34-37).

Srī Suka said: On hearing that declaration of the darling of their hearts, the women of Vraja greatly rejoiced; and their memories crowding in upon them on hearing the message, they¹ said to Uddhava, 'Kamsa, enemy of the Yadus, and the cause of all their woes, has, praise be to Heaven, been killed with all his following, and Achyuta lives happily with His well-wishers, who have all they wish. Does Gada's elder brother, greeted by the loving and eloquent looks and bashful smiles of the city women, give them the joy that is our due, my friend? How can He, being a connoisseur of the art of love and the darling of the most splendid women, escape falling under the spell of their alluring words and ways? Does Govinda by any chance remember us, rustics, good sir, when He is with his circle of city women, and the talk ranges freely, and something happens to be said that might bring us to His mind? Does He ever recall those nights when He enjoyed Himself in Vṛndāvana, which was lovely with its lily and *kundā* blooms and the moonlight on it, while we, His loves, sang in the Rāsa dance, with its tinkling of anklet bells, the charming tale of His doings? Will the Dāśārha really come here to revive us with His loving touch, scorched as we are with grief on account of Him, as Indra does the forest with rain? Why should Krishna come here when, having slain His enemies and got His kingdom, He is happy, married to the daughters of Kings, and with all His friends about Him? What use can He, the mighty and heroic Lord and Consort of the Goddess Srī, Who knows no lack and is ever perfect, have for us, forest folk, or for any other women, for that matter? To resign all expectations is to be supremely happy, said even Pingalā, the courtesan;

¹ S. suggests that this, and the next seven verses, were spoken each by a different set of persons, and therefore absolute consistency is not to be looked for.

but though we know that, it is impossible to reconcile ourselves to the idea of not seeing Krishna again. How could one forgo the delight of intimate talk with the Illustrious Lord from Whose breast Śrī would not budge for a moment, even if He did not care for her? This river, these mountains and sylvan retreats, which Krishna frequented with Sankarshana, these cows, and the notes of the flute—every one of these reminds us again and again of Nanda Gopa's son, noble sir; seeing those footprints¹ of His, with their auspicious marks, we cannot get Him out of our minds. How can we forget Him, sir, Who ravished our hearts with His soft movements, His gay laughter and playful looks, and His honey-sweet words? O Lord! Spouse of Ramā! Master of Vraja! Dispeller of woes! Govinda! Raise up this Gokula from the sea of suffering wherein it lies submerged' (38-52).

Śrī Suka said: And they, the fever of separation abated by the message of Krishna, honoured Uddhava, knowing Krishna to be Adhokshaja Himself and none other than their own soul. He lived there for some months, assuaging the Gopis' grief; and singing the tale of Krishna's pastimes, he delighted the inmates of Gokulam. Everyday he spent in Nanda's Vraja passed like a second for its people, because all the talk was of Krishna. The devoted retainer of Hari, as he looked at the river, the forests, the mountains and valleys and the trees in flower, found never-failing delight in reviving the Vraja folks' memories of Krishna at every turn. Having thus seen for himself the Gopis' tremulous and all-absorbing love for Krishna, Uddhava was profoundly moved and pleased; and he uttered these sentiments, as he made his reverence to them: 'These Gopa women alone have achieved the supreme purpose of life on earth, for they have given Govinda, the Soul of all, that unbounded love which those who dread the cycle of birth and death, and those who have won freedom, as well as we, yearn for. Who that delights in the tale of the glory of Ananta would care to exchange his life

¹ The foot prints may have been seen by the Gopis merely with the mind's eye; though some of the commentators suggest that they were intact.

even for that of Brahmā? How unimaginable seems such intense love for Krishna, the supreme Soul, in women of the forest folk tainted by unchastity! Without a doubt the Supreme Lord directly confers liberation even on the ignorant man who worships Him according to his lights, just as nectar does the highest good to the man who drinks it not knowing what it is. Ah, how wonderful! such plenary grace was never vouchsafed to the Goddess Śrī Herself, who finds infinite joy in cleaving to His breast, or to the celestial nymphs who have the fragrance and the sheen of the lotus—why speak of other women?—as was the lot of the cowherd women of Vraja, whose supreme desire was fulfilled when they had His strong arm flung round their necks in the Rāsa revels! How blest I should be could I be reborn as any bush, creeper or plant in Vṛndāvana, carrying the dust of the feet of these women who, discarding that which is not easily renounced—one's kith and kin, and the path of Dharma—found the way to Mukunda, which even the Vedas must still explore; who shed their sorrows by lodging on their breasts and warmly clasping, in the Rāsa dance, the lotus feet of Krishna; which Śrī and Aja and the liberated all worship, and which even master-yogis can adore only in their hearts! I shall ever abase myself before the least little particle of dust from the feet of the women of Nanda's Vraja, whose swelling song, celebrating the deeds of Hari, sanctifies the three worlds' (53-63).

Śrī Suka said: Then, requesting the Gopis, Yaśōda and Nanda, to permit him to depart, and taking leave of the Gopas, the Dāsārha got into his chariot. When he was leaving, Nanda and others brought him many presents; they surrounded him and said, their eyes filling with the tears of love, 'May our minds cling always to Krishna's lotus feet, our tongues speak His names, our bodies do Him reverence. Wherever we might happen to be tossed about by the will of the Lord in consequence of our past *karmas*, may it be given to us to love Krishna, the Supreme Lord, as the result of such good as we had done and such gifts as we had made'. Thus honoured by the Gopas because of their devotion to Krishna, Uddhava returned to that Mathurā which

was under Krishna's protection. And having made his prostrations at Krishna's feet, he told Him of the marvellous love of the Vraja folk ; and he told Rama, Vasudeva and the King too, and gave them all the presents he had brought (64-69).

CHAPTER XLVIII

KRISHNA VISITS TRIVAKRĀ AND AKRŪRA

Srī Suka said : Some time later, the exalted Lord, the Soul of all, the All-seeing, Who knew what the love-lorn waiting woman avidly desired, went to her house to fulfil her wish. Seeing Him coming, she sprang up from her seat in a fever of excitement, and advanced with her companions to welcome Achyuta to that house, sumptuously furnished with rare fittings and all means of stimulating desire, decorated with ropes of pearl, banners and buntings, and attractive with its canopied bedsteads and divans, its lights, and the fragrance of incense and wreaths. She received Him fittingly and placed for Him the seat of honour. Uddhava, who met with due respect at her hands, touched the proffered seat in acknowledgement of her courtesy and sat on the ground. But Krishna, following the ways of the world, quickly occupied the luxurious bed. To enhance her attractiveness, she bathed, rubbed her body with unguents, put on fine raiment, adorned herself with jewellery, circled her brows with a chaplet, scented herself, and having quaffed some sweet and heady drink, came to Mādhava chewing *pan*, with smiling coquettish glances, at once gay and bashful. Calling to His side the lovely woman who hesitated with the shyness natural to a first union, He took her by her bangled hand, and drew her to the couch and had His sport with her, whose sole merit was that she had given Him the unguent. She assuaged the fever of love in her breasts, bosom and eyes by placing Ananta's feet on them ; she inhaled their fragrance and crushed in her arms the loved One, Bliss Incarnate, as she held Him between her breasts ; and thus she shed the pangs of endless years (1-7).

Having thus attained, by the present of the unguent, the Supreme Lord of Liberation, Who is not easily

reached, the luckless woman could only think of asking for this: she said to Him, 'You must live with me for some days, dearest, and enjoy yourself. I cannot bring myself to part with you, O Lotus-eyed!' Promising her what she desired, and giving her tokens of His kindness, the Omnipotent Lord, Who could bestow honour appropriately, returned with Uddhava to His opulent home. She, who had won the favour of Vishnu, Lord Paramount over the Powers, Who is not easily propitiated, showed herself a fool in asking for the trivial pleasures of the senses (8-11).

The Lord Krishna, accompanied by Rama and Uddhava, went to Akrūra's house, wishing to get him do a certain thing, and also to give him pleasure. Seeing from afar his distinguished kinsmen coming, Akrūra advanced in great gladness to receive them, and embracing them bade them welcome. He bowed to Krishna and Rama, and they prostrated themselves before him. When they had taken the proffered seats, he did the honours of the house. Sprinkling on his head the water that had washed their feet, and welcoming them with the presentation of splendid raiment, rare scents, wreaths and ornaments, he bowed his head at their feet. Then taking those feet on his lap and gently pressing them, Akrūra spoke thus to Krishna and Rama. 'Heaven be thanked for the destruction of the wicked Kamsa with all his following. You have redeemed your race from its desperate straits and brought it prosperity. You two, as Pradhāna and Purusha, are the Cause of the universe, and you pervade it; outside you cause or effect there is none. Seemingly entering the universe created by Thy powers, Thou, O Brahma¹, appearest as the manifold that is apprehended by the senses. Just as earth and other elements are seen as multifarious in the objects of creation, both stationary and moving, through which they manifest themselves, so Thou, the Ātman, One without a second, art by Thine own volition apparent in the infinite diversity of the material world that owes its existence to Thee. Thou dost create, destroy and preserve the universe by Thy own powers, the qualities of Rajas, Tamas, and Sattva. But Thou

¹ S's *alt.* for 'Brahma', which he renders as 'Paramesvara'.

art not limited and conditioned by those qualities or by those actions ; indeed how couldst Thou That art pure consciousness come under the sway of (nescience) the cause of bondage ? Even the *jīva*, truly considered, is not subject to the sense of difference or to birth ; his limiting adjuncts, the body and the rest, are purely phenomenal¹. For Thee there can be neither bondage nor freedom. It is only our incapacity to discriminate that makes us imagine Thee as liable to these. Whenever the primordial Vedic faith, which Thou Thyself hast promulgated for the welfare of humanity, is assailed by the teachings of the atheists, Thou appearest in the world taking a form of pure *sattva*. Accordingly, O Lord, Thou hast now descended into the family of Vasudeva, with an *amśa*² of Thyself, to rid the earth of her burden, by the destruction of the hundred *akshauhīnīs* of the Kings who are partial incarnations of Asuras, and to spread the fame of this clan far and wide (12-24).

'Supremely sanctified are our homes this day, O Adhokshaja, Sovereign Lord and Master of the universe, since Thou hast stepped in, Thou That art the embodiment of all the gods, the manes; and the spirits, of the world of men and the Vedas ; and the touch of the water that has washed Thy feet purifies the three worlds. What sensible man will seek refuge other than Thee, Lover and Benefactor of Thy devotees, That speakest the truth always, and never forgettest a good deed, That grantest him who loves Thee all that he desires, and Thyself too, That knowest neither increase nor diminution ? It is our supreme good fortune, O Janārdana, that Thou That art beyond the reach of the master-yogis and the foremost of the gods, art here before our very eyes ; pray sunder forthwith the bonds of infatuation that bind us to son and wife, wealth and friend, home and body, and that are the work of Thy Māyā.' (25-27).

Honoured and extolled by His devotee, the Lord Hari smilingly replied in words of a beguiling charm. The Lord said : ' You are our revered elder and uncle, our best and constant friend. You should give us your

¹ (lit.) 'will not stand the test of scrutiny, as they will be found to have no intrinsic reality' (S.). ² S : 'along with Balarāma (Thy fraction)'.

protection and support and sympathy, for we are your children. Blessed souls like you, worthiest of men, should be unremittingly served by those who desire the highest good. The gods are self-regarding, but not good men. It is not as if the sacred waters, or the gods invoked in images of earth and stone do not purify. They do purify one, but slowly and over long years; good men do so at sight (28-31).

'You, respected sir, are first among our well-wishers. So I would like you to go to Gajāhvaya to find out, with a view to promoting their good, how the Pāṇdavas fare. We have heard that when their father died, the sorrowing children were brought with their mother to the city by the King, and that they live there. The small-minded King, the son of Ambikā, does not act impartially towards his nephews; being blind, he is under the thumb of his evil sons. Please go and find out how it fares with them, well or ill. Knowing how matters stand, we shall attend to their welfare'. Having thus bidden Akrūra, the exalted and supreme Lord Hari returned home with Uddhava and Sankarshaṇa (32-36).

CHAPTER XLIX

AKRŪRA AT HASTINĀPURA

Srī Suka said: He (Akrūra) went to Hastināpura, which bore ample testimony to the renown of the Kings of the Puru line, and met there the son of Ambikā, as well as Bhīṣma, Vidura and Prthā, Bāhlika and his son (Soma-datta), the scion of the Bharadwājas (Droṇa), and him of the Gautamas (Kṛpa). He also met Karṇa, Duryodhana, the son of Droṇa, the Pāṇdavas, well-wishers, and others¹. The son of Gāndhīnī appropriately greeted his relations and answered their kindly enquiries about their friends, and himself asked about their health and welfare. He stayed there for some months, wishing to ascertain the disposition of the pusillanimous King, who had wicked sons, and was amenable to the will of mischief-makers. Prthā and Vidura told him of the evil designs of those who could not bear to see the prowess, skill in the use of weapons,

¹ 'Unfriends like Śakuni', (S.)

strength, heroism, modesty and other virtues of Pṛthā's sons and the affection the subjects bore them; and also of the administering of poison and other scandalous acts of the sons of Dhṛtarāshtra (1-6).

As soon as she heard that her cousin had come, Pṛthā had gone out to meet him; and thinking of the home of her birth, she asked, with tears in her eyes, 'Do they all remember us, my dear, my parents and brothers, my sisters and nephews, my sisters-in-law and my playmates? Do my brother's sons, the Lord Krishna, the Refuge of all and the Lover of His devotees, and Rama, the lotus-eyed, remember the children of their aunt? Shall I, who sorrow in the midst of rivals like a doe among wolves, and my fatherless children, ever hear His words of comfort and consolation? Krishna, O Krishna, Master-yogi, Controller of all hearts, Protector of the universe, Govinda, save me who suffer grievously with my little ones, I throw myself on Thy mercy. I see no refuge, for men who are terrified of the transmigratory life, which is death, other than the lotus feet that bring liberation, of Thee, the Supreme Lord. I offer my adoration to Krishna, the ever-pure, Brahma and Soul Supreme, Lord of yoga, Jñāna incarnate. I beseech Thy protection' (7-13).

Srī Suka said: Thus did your great-grandmother weep aloud in her sorrow, O King, as she thought of her own folk, and of Krishna, the Lord of the universe. Akrūra, who shared her joys and sorrows¹, and the renowned Vidura comforted Kuntī by recalling the circumstances² of the birth of her children (14-16).

Before leaving, Akrūra met the partial King, who doted on his sons, and gave him, in the midst of friends, the message from his relations inspired by genuine goodwill. Akrūra said: 'O son of Vichitravīrya, enhancer of the fame of the Kurus, your brother Pāndu being dead, you occupy the throne. By ruling the kingdom righteously, pleasing the subjects by your conduct, and dealing impartially with all your people, you will prosper and win renown. If you do otherwise, you will be condemned by the world and be exceedingly unhappy. So you must be scrupulously impartial between the sons

¹ As her cousin. ² The miraculous nature of those births.

of Pāndu and your own. It is given to no one in this world to be for ever united with another, O King, not even with his own body, let alone wife or children. Every creature comes alone into this world and alone he goes out; alone he experiences the consequences of his deeds, good and evil. The ill-gotten wealth of the foolish man is wasted by those who claim the right to be reared by him, as the fish's fry drink up the water that sustains it. His own life, wealth, sons, and all else that the stupid man pampers by unrighteous means, from attachment to what he looks upon as his own, desert him, when he has had little enjoyment out of them. He, who did not know his own good, goes, abandoned by them, and carrying his sins with him, to the deepest of hells, having got no satisfaction out of life, because he had turned his face away from Dharma. Therefore, looking upon this world as no more than a dream, magic show, or reverie, control your mind by your will, find peace in your heart, and look on all with an equal eye, my lord' (14-25).

Dhṛtarāshtra replied, 'While you are giving such wholesome counsel, O Dānapati, I feel, like the mortal who has tasted nectar, that I could never have enough of it. But these kindly words, like the lightning flash, do not abide in the fickle heart vitiated by partiality for my son. Who can thwart the designs of the Omnipotent, Who is incarnate in the Yadu clan for lightening the burden of the earth? Salutations to Him, the Supreme Lord, Who, having created all this by His Power of Māyā, whose ways of working are inscrutable, and having Himself entered into that creation, allots to each the fruits of his *karma*, and Whose mysterious play is what chiefly keeps the wheel of transmigratory existence revolving' (26-29).

Srī Suka said: Seeing how the mind of the King was working, the scion of the Yadus took leave of his friends and returned to the city of the Yadus. And he reported to Rama and Krishna about Dhṛtarāshtra's attitude towards the Pāndavas, which he had been sent to ascertain, O son of the Kurus (30-31).

(Here ends *Book X (Part I) of Srīmad-Bhāgavatam*)

SRIMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

BOOK X (Part II)

CHAPTER L

JARĀSANDHA INVADES MATHURĀ

Srī Suka said: Asti and Prāpti, the queens of Kamsa, went heart-broken to their father's home when their husband died, O foremost of the Bharatas. The sorrowing women acquainted their father Jarāsandha, the King of Magadha, with the circumstances in which they were widowed. When he heard the shocking news, he was filled with grief and anger and made an all-out effort to rid the earth of the Yādavas, O King. With an army of twenty-three *akshauhini*s, he blockaded Mathura, the capital of the Yadus, on all sides. As He looked at that force, which was like an ocean that had broken its bounds, and His own city under siege, and His terrified people, Krishna, the Lord Hari, incarnate for a purpose, considered how best He might effect the object of His descent by making the most of circumstances. 'I shall destroy this concentrated burden of the earth, the army of many *akshauhini*s, with its chariot, horse and elephant forces, that the King of Magadha has drafted from all kingly houses¹ and brought here. But the King of Magadha should not be slain; he must be left to muster his forces again. My present incarnation is for the purpose of ridding the earth of its burden, protecting the good and destroying the rest. Likewise, whenever unrighteousness raises its head, I assume a body to destroy it and to protect Dharma.' (1-10).

While Govinda was thus resolving in His mind, there descended from the sky two chariots shining like the sun, with charioteers and accoutrements; and there also came of their own accord the celestial weapons that were theirs from all eternity. On seeing them, Hṛshi-

¹ (v.r.) 'from all kings amenable to his control'.

keśa said to Sankarshana, 'Look, my Lord, how desperate are the straits in which the Yadus, who look to you for protection, find themselves. Here is your chariot come, and your favourite weapons. Riding in the chariot, destroy this army and rescue your own from distress. It is for doing this and securing the welfare of the good, O supreme Lord, that we have taken birth. Remove the burden of these twenty-three *akshauhiṇīs* from the earth' (11-15).

Having thus conferred with each other, the Dāsārhas donned armour and went forth from the city in their chariots, armed with their splendid weapons, but accompanied by a very small force. Emerging from the city, Hari, who had Dārūka for His charioteer, blew on His conch-shell, and the hearts of the enemy forces quaked with fear. On seeing those two, the King of the Magadhas said, 'Ah ! Krishna, is it you, you despicable wretch ? I would not, for very shame, engage in single combat with the like of you, mere stripping that you are, and one who lay¹ so long in concealment ! Get away with you, fool. I will not fight with you, murderer of your kin. But you, Rama, fight if you care to, stand² your ground. You will go to heaven, leaving your body here, hacked by my arrows, or you will kill me'. The Lord answered, 'Valiant men do not boast ; they show their prowess in action. We shall not mind the words, O King, of one who is mortally sick and at the point of death' (15-20).

Srī Suka went on : 'The son of Jarā, advancing to the attack, surrounded, with a huge army, far stronger than theirs, the scions of the Madhus with their army, vehicles, flags and charioteers, as the wind blots out the sun with clouds, and fire with dust. Not seeing on the battle-field the chariots of Hari and Rama, with their flags carrying the effigies of Garuda and the palm tree, the women of the city, who had climbed on to the top of the citadel, the terraces of great mansions and *gopuras*, were bewildered and grief-stricken. Seeing His own army harassed by the fierce arrows showered on them by the enemy forces, Hari set that best of bows,

¹ In Nanda's colony, where He lived *incognito*. ² (v.r.) 'Show your courage'.

Sārṅga, which received the homage of gods and Asuras, thundering ; it looked like a whirling firebrand, as He incessantly took shafts from the quivers, fitted them to the bow, drew it and discharged volleys of sharp arrows at a time, and hit the chariots, elephants, horses and infantry. Elephants fell, their temples cleft ; and so did horses, in huge numbers, their necks severed by arrows ; and chariots, their horses, flags, drivers and riders shot down ; and foot-soldiers, their arms, necks and thighs sheared. From¹ the bodies of the men, elephants and horses cut to pieces there flowed hundreds of rivers of blood, which went to swell each other ; they had men's arms for snakes and human heads for tortoises, elephants' carcasses for islets, and multitudes of dead horses for swarming crocodiles ; they had the hands and thighs of men for fish, human hair for moss and bows for waves ; they were cluttered up with missiles like thickets, and frightful with the cart-wheels that looked like whirlpools. Great gems and splendid ornaments they swept away as if they were rocks and pebbles. They struck terror into the hearts of the cowardly and heartened the brave in battle. And Sankarshaṇa of the measureless might, hammering the arrogant foe with His pestle, destroyed that force, my good sir, unapproachable and terrible, plumbless and vast like the ocean, which the King of the Magadhas commanded. These exploits were mere play to the sons of Vasudeva, the supreme Lords of the worlds. That He of the infinite attributes, Who playfully wills the protection, creation and destruction of the three worlds, should have destroyed the enemy is no matter for wonder. But because He was masquerading as a man I have re-counted it (21-30).

Rama pounced upon Jarāsandha of the immense strength as one lion might on another ; the latter had lost his chariot and all else but his life, and his army had been destroyed. When he proceeded to bind him, who had destroyed many a foe, with the bonds of Varuṇa and with cords, Govinda dissuaded Him, having a purpose in view. Set free by the masters of the worlds, he, who enjoyed the esteem of valiant men, felt so humi-

¹ This sustained metaphor is strongly reminiscent of the *Vālmiki Ramayana* passages in VI. 53 (Tr.).

liated that he made up his mind to retire to the penitential woods ; but while on his way there he was dissuaded from his purpose by the kings, whose counsel was guided by Dharma as much as by worldly wisdom. ' This defeat you have suffered at the hands of the Yadus was but the result of past *karma*. ' All his army having been destroyed, and himself contemptuously let off by the Lord, that King, Brhadratha's son, returned to the Magadhas with a sad heart (31-35).

And Mukunda, having negotiated the ocean of enemy forces with His army intact, returned to Mathurā, the applauding gods showering flowers on Him ; and the citizens, relieved of anxiety and rejoicing, came out to receive Him, with the bards, minstrels and heralds singing His victory. Hundreds of conch-shells were blown, and kettle-drums, drums, *tūryas*, *viṇās*, flutes and *mṛdangas* played, as the Lord entered the city. Its roads had been well-watered and were thronged with glad people ; it was decorated with flags and buntings and hung with joyous festoons everywhere, and it resounded with the chanting of Vedic hymns. He was showered with flowers, curd, unbroken rice, and tender shoots by the women, as they lovingly gazed on Him, with eyes fairly abloom with joy. The Lord presented to the King of the Yadus with all respect the spoils of war brought from the battle-field, which are the true ornament¹ of the hero. Thus the King of the Magadhas fought the Yadus commanded by Krishna seventeen times, each time with as many *akshauhīnīs* as at the first encounter². By the power of Krishna, the Vṛshnis destroyed all that army. When his forces had been wiped out, the King, let off by his enemies, went back (36-43).

Before the eighteenth attack came, a Yavana warrior (known as Kāla-Yavana) descended upon Mathurā suddenly, instigated by Nārada, and invested it with an army of three crores of barbarians. He, to whom none in the world of men could stand up in a fight, had been

¹ (*alt.*) 'The enormous wealth found in the battle-field in the shape of ornaments worn by the heroic dead'. ² S: "Even after such a defeat, the King of the Magadhas continued to command many *akshauhīnīs*, and he fought the Yadus seventeen times". The translation follows others.

told that the Vṛshnis were his peers. On seeing him, Krishna and Sankarshaṇa conferred together: 'Fearful indeed is the peril that besets the Yadus on both sides. Here is this Yavana besieging us with his great strength, and the King of the Magadhas too will be here today or tomorrow or the day after. Should the son of Jarā come when we two are engaged in fighting this man, he is strong enough to kill our people or lead them captive to his city. So we must now build a stronghold inaccessible to men, and after settling our people there, we shall contrive the Yavana's death' (44-49).

Having thus resolved, the Lord had a fortress built in the sea, and within it a city twelve *yojanas* long, and marvellous in every part of it, wherein was demonstrated the excellence of the science and skill of the architect Viśvakarmā. It was constructed in accordance with the laws of city-planning, with royal highways, squares and streets, with gardens where grew the trees and vines of the celestial regions, and delightful woods all around it. There were sky-kissing crystal watch-towers and gateways topped with gold crests, granaries and stables of silver and brass, crowned with golden pots, houses built of gold, with crests of precious stones and floors paved with great emeralds, places of worship for the gods, and lofty terraces. It teemed with people belonging to the four *varṇas*, and the mansions of the Yadu chieftains enhanced its splendour. The great Indra sent to Hari Sudharmā, and the *pārijāta* tree, in whose proximity men do not suffer from the disabilities of the flesh. Varuṇa sent horses, all white but for one black ear, and swift as thought. The Lord of Wealth, one of the Guardians of the worlds, sent the Eight Treasures, his unique possession. Likewise, all other potentates and powers placed at the disposal of Hari, incarnate on earth, all the resources that He had bestowed on them to enable them effectively to carry out the duties of their offices, O King. Transporting the entire people by His *yogic* power to that city, He took counsel with Rāmā, who remained there (in Mathurā) to guard it; then Hari set forth from the city gates, wearing a lotus garland, but unarmed (50-58).

CHAPTER LI

THE YAVANA BURNT BY MUCHUKUNDA

Srī Suka said : Looking at Him as He came forth, like the rising moon, a delight to the eye, dark-hued, clad in yellow silks, with the Srīvatsa mark on His breast, and the brilliant Kausthubha jewel hung on His neck, with His four long and sturdy arms and eyes of a warm red like the fresh-blown lotus, the gracious lotus face radiant with its lovely cheeks, smiling lips and flashing ear-pendants, the Yavana concluded, 'This is Vāsudeva, without a doubt, judging by what Nārada said—he bears the Srīvatsa mark, has four arms, and eyes like the lotus, and he wears the garland of wild flowers, and is of a surpassing beauty. Since he goes unarmed and on foot, I shall fight him without arms'. Resolved thus, he pursued Him, as He turned his back on him and fled, wishing to take Him captive, Who is beyond the reach of even the yogis. The Lord of the Yavanas was decoyed by Hari, Who looked every moment as if He were about to fall into his hands, step by step to a mountain cave. And he pursued Him, the while he taunted Him, saying, 'It is unseemly of one born of the Yadu clan to run away like this'. But he could not come up with Him since he had not dissipated his heritage of evil *karma*. Unmindful of the insult, the Lord entered the cave. And he, following, saw another man who was sleeping there. 'Ah ! having drawn me on a long way, here he lies, like an innocent soul !' Taking him for Achyuta, the fool kicked him. He, who had been sleeping long, woke up, and slowly opening his eyes looked about him and saw him (the Yavana) standing by his side. The moment the glance of the irate man fell upon him, he was burnt by the fire which it kindled in his body, and reduced to ashes in a trice, O scion of the Bharatas (1-12).

The King asked : 'Who was that man who destroyed the Yavana, O Brahman ? Of what race was he, and how strong ? Why had he come and lain down in that cave ? Whose son was he ?' Srī Suka said : He was a scion of the Ikshvākus, and the mighty son of Māndhātā. Known to fame as Muchukunda, he was a

lover of Brahmanas and a man of his word. Begged by Indra and the hosts of the gods to protect them against the Asuras, of whom they were terrified, he did so for long years. Having got Guha to command the heavenly host, they said to Muchukunda, 'Rest, O King, from your strenuous labours defending us. In abandoning your kingdom in the world of men, which was free from all trouble, and undertaking our protection, you, O heroic one, renounced all that you loved. Your sons, queens, relations, ministers, counsellors, and the subjects that were your contemporaries, have all been swept away, and are gone. Stronger than the strongest is Time, the destroyer, who is none other than the Supreme and Eternal Lord. He moves all creatures hither and thither in play, as the shepherd moves his flock. You may ask of us any boon you like, except liberation. That only One can grant, the exalted and eternal Lord Vishnu.' Thus told, the illustrious man thanked the gods, entered the cave and slept the sleep that the gods had given him as a boon, telling him, 'The senseless fellow who awakes you in midsleep shall be burnt to ashes the moment you see him' (13-22).

When the Yavana had been reduced to ashes, the exalted Lord, first of the Sātvatas, showed Himself to the wise Muchukunda. On seeing Him with His four arms, dark as the rain-cloud and clad in yellow silks, with His breast marked by the Srīvatsa and lit up by the dazzling Kausthubha, charming the world of men with His Vaijayanti garland, with the lovely and gracious face and glittering ear-pendants, with the loving, smiling glance and the fresh beauty of youth, and the noble gait as of the proud lion, the sagacious man was overawed by His splendour, which made Him unapproachable; and as a suspicion occurred to him, he hesitantly questioned Him, Who seemed invincible in His puissance (23-27).

Muchukunda asked: 'Who may you be, honoured sir, who have come wandering on feet soft as lotus petals, to this mountain cave in the unpeopled and thorny wilderness? Are you by any chance the splendour in all splendid things, the honoured god of fire, the sun, the moon or mighty Indra, or any other Guardian of the

worlds ? I think you must be the Chief of the three Great Gods, for you dispel the darkness of the cave with your radiance like a great light. May we, who in all sincerity wish to hear, know, if you do not mind, your name as well as your family and exploits, O best of men ? We are, O foremost of men, humble Kshatriyas of the Ikshvāku line. I am the son of Māndhātā, son of Yuvanāśva, O Lord, and known as Muchukunda. Weary from long vigil, I was overcome by drowsiness and slept as I wished in this unpeopled forest. I was just now waked by someone ; and he was reduced to ashes, it must be by his own sin ; and then I saw you, Gracious Lord, Destroyer of the foe. Dazzled by your overpowering refulgence, I am unable to gaze on your face for long. You, O blessed One, are worthy of the reverence of all creatures' (28-35).

Thus deferentially addressed by the King, the exalted Lord, Who protects all creatures, replied with a laugh in a voice deep as thunder. The Lord said : 'My births, deeds and names are legion, my good sir ; being infinite, they cannot be reckoned even by Me. Even supposing that somebody might succeed in the course of many lives in numbering the particles of dust in the earth, he would never be able to count My births, each with its distinctive qualities, deeds and names. The great *rishis*, trying to keep count of My lives and deeds, past, present and future, never reach the end of their task. Still, I will tell you what they currently are, My friend, listen. Requested of yore by Brahmā to protect Dharma and destroy the Asuras, who made themselves a burden to the earth, I was born into the Yadu clan, in the house of Ānakadundubhi. Being the son of Vasudeva, they call me Vāsudeva. I slew Kamsā who was none other than Kālanemi, as well as Pralamba and other enemies of the good. And this Yavana has been consumed, O King, by the fire in your eye. Having been earnestly entreated by you in the past, I, who love My devotees, came to this cave to bestow My grace on you. Ask any boon you like, royal sage, you shall have your wish. The man who resorts to Me shall no more sorrow.' (36-44).

Sri Suka said : Thus told, Muchukunda prostrated

himself before Him, with joy in his heart ; he recalled Garga's¹ words and knew that it was the Lord Narayana. Muchukunda said : ' O Lord, men and women, deluded by Thy Power of Māyā, do not see Thee That art the Supreme Good, and do not worship Thee ; but, taken in by each other, they cling to house and home, the source of misery, hoping for happiness. Having obtained by luck, and with no conscious effort on their part, that which is rarely attained, birth as a human being, with a sound body, and in full possession of all their faculties, men in their folly tumble into the family life, like an animal into a disused well, O Perfection, and fail to devote themselves to Thy lotus feet. My kingly pride inflated by sovereign power, I have wasted all my life in endless care, O Invincible, deluded into thinking of the body as the soul, and infatuated with son and wife, wealth and land. Prizing my body because it was a King's, though in truth it was no better than a wall or a water-jar, I was so arrogant as to forget Thee, and I went up and down the earth and back and forth on it, surrounded with all the pomp of chariot and elephant, horse and infantry, and with all my generals about me. While the heedless man is absorbed in his endless ambitions, his desperate yearnings and his mounting greed, Thou, ever vigilant, all-destroying Time, layest him low, as the snake, licking its chops, pounces on the rat. The body that was once known as a king, moving about in chariots adorned with gold, or riding on elephants bred in the Matanga mountains, is reduced by Thy power, time, which there is no escaping, to that state in which it is known variously as ordure, worm or ash. The man who, having been victorious at all points of the compass, has no more battles to fight and sits enthroned in high estate, enjoying the fealty of kings who had been his equals, is yet kept dangling, O Lord, like a pet deer on a lead in the women's apartments where the highest happiness is love-making. He forgoes pleasures and performs religious works, subjecting himself to severe austerities and spending lavishly, impelled by the inordi-

¹ The prophecy of Vriddha-Garga, that 'in the 28th *yuga* the Lord will be incarnate as man' (V. P. V xxiii 24).

nate longing, 'May I have dominion again¹ over the earth!' and thus never knows happiness (45-53).

'O Achyuta, when the time is ripe for a man to be freed from the bondage of birth, he is led into association with good men; only when that happens, does he develop devotion to Thee, That art the Goal of the good and the Controller of the world of cause and effect. I can only think that it was Thy Grace, O Lord—though it was seemingly chance—that freed me from kingship and all its cares, a deliverance that many emperors pray for, who are wise men and would gladly go to the penitential woods to lead the solitary life. I crave no boon other than service at Thy feet, Omniscient Lord, than which there is nothing higher that the man who has emptied himself of the ego can pray for. What man of sense, having propitiated Thee, Dispenser of liberation, O Hari, will ask for a boon, which could only lead to bondage? Therefore, O Lord, eschewing all desires, which are bound to involve one with the *guṇas*, *sattva* *rajas* and *tamas*, I surrender myself to Thee, Lord Almighty, One without a second, Pristine Consciousness, unlimited and unqualified. Distraught for endless ages, reaping the fruits of *karma*, suffering the compulsions of subliminal instincts, with the six internal foes² insatiate, leaving me no peace,³ I have come, O Sanctuary of peace, O Lord Supreme, to Thy lotus feet; for they are the Truth, and there fear is not, neither is sorrow. Save me, O Lord, in my peril' (54-58).

The Lord answered: 'Serene and unclouded is your mind, King and Emperor, and unshakable your faith, since it has been proof against temptations. Though you were tempted with the offer of boons, you were not thrown off your guard; that, you must know, is because the minds of those who give their exclusive devotion to Me do not succumb to any enjoyments that might come their way. But the minds of those who lack devotion to Me, however much they might strive to still them by control of the breath, and so on, still show themselves avid for enjoyments, O King, because their innate

¹ i.e. in future births. ² 'the sense-organs' (S.). ³ (alt.) 'I have, thanks to fate, somehow achieved peace'.

tendencies have not been extinguished. Go where you will with your mind always fixed on Me. Your devotion to Me shall be steady and constant. Leading the life of a Kshattriya, you have in your time taken life in the chase and in other ways. Purge yourself of that sin by practising austerities with a collected mind, taking refuge in Me. You shall take another birth as a worthy Brahmana, foremost of those that befriend all creatures, and attain Me, the One That abides' (59-64).

CHAPTER LII

RUKMINI'S MESSAGE

Srī Suka said : Thus blessed by Krishna, my good sir, that scion of the Ikshvākus reverently walked round Him, and prostrated himself again and again before Him, and then came out of the cave. Finding that men and beasts, shrubs and trees were all of a midget size, he concluded that the Kali age had come, and he proceeded north. Free from all attachments, and untroubled by doubts, that man of discriminating wisdom entered the Gandhamādana mountain, intent on austerities, his mind wholly centred on Krishna. Reaching the hermitage of Badari, the abode of Nara and Narayana, he, with peace in his heart, propitiated Hari with his austerities, putting up with the sway of the pairs of opposites (1-4).

Returning to the city, invested by the Yavana forces, the Lord destroyed the Mleccha horde. And He was on His way to Dvārakā, taking with Him the spoils won from them—which the men, charged with the task by Achyuta, were removing loaded on the backs of oxen—when Jarāsandha came, with twenty-three *akshauhīnis* under his command. Seeing the impetuous onset of the enemy forces, the Lords of the Madhus fled, behaving like ordinary men. Abandoning an immense quantity of valuable goods, the fearless ones, feigning extreme timorousness, fled many *yojanas* on those feet soft as lotus petals. Seeing them run, the strong King of the Magadhas laughed a great laugh and sprang after

them with his chariot-forces in pursuit; he could not take the measure of the all-powerful Lords (5-9).

Having run a long way, they, greatly tired, went up a high mountain, known as Pravarshaṇa, where the Lord Indra sends down incessant rains. Knowing that they had hid themselves on the mountain, but being unable to spot them, he set fire to the mountain, O King, firing faggots all around it. Thereupon the two took a leap from the mountain, whose slopes were ablaze to a height of eleven *yojanas*, and landed clear on the ground. Unseen by the enemy and his forces, the two Yadu Chiefs returned to their own sea-girt city, O King. And the King of the Magadhas, wrongly concluding that Bala and Keśava had perished in the flames, withdrew with his huge army to the Magadhas (10-14).

It has already been told how the prosperous ruler of Anarta¹, Raivata, gave his daughter Revati in marriage to Bala on the advice of Brahmā. The Lord Govinda espoused at a 'bride's choice', O best of the Kurus, the daughter of Bhīshmaka, the King of Vidarbha, who was a digit of the Goddess Śrī Herself; swiftly striking at the Kings headed by Sālva, the partisans of the King of Chedi, He carried her off, as the son of Tārکشya had carried off the nectar, in view of all the world (15-17).

The King here interrupted: 'The exalted Lord, it is said, married Rukmiṇi of the lovely face, the daughter of Bhīshmaka, by the Rākshasa² mode. Revered sir, I am eager to know exactly how Krishna of the measureless puissance carried off the maid, defeating the King of the Magadhas, Sālva and others. Who that knows what is really worth hearing can tire, O Brahman, of listening to the tales of Krishna, which bring a great guerdon, and fill the ear with delight, which remove the sins of the world and take the mind at every turn with a glad surprise?' (18-20).

Srī Suka said: There was a great ruler of the Vidarbhas known to fame as Bhīshmaka. He had five sons and a lovely daughter. Rukmī was the eldest of them; the others, in due order, were Rukmaratha, Rukmabāhu,

¹ See Book IX. iii 29-30. ² Marriage by capture, one of the nine modes recognised by the law-givers.

Rukmākeśa and Rukmāmālī ; the virtuous Rukmiṇī was their sister. Having heard those who came to their house descant upon Mukūnda's beauty, valour, noble qualities and opulence, she decided that He was the spouse for her. And Krishna too had made up His mind to wed her, who with her intelligence, her noble bearing and large-heartedness, her beauty, character and virtues, was in every way worthy of Him. While his relations desired to give his sister in marriage to Krishna, O King, Rukmī, who was hostile to Krishna, opposed it ; he favoured the King of the Chedis. Coming to know of this, the dark-eyed¹ daughter of the King of Vidarbha was very unhappy. Carefully thinking over the matter, she sent a trustworthy Brahmana to Krishna with all despatch (21-26).

Reaching Dvārakā he was admitted to the presence by the door-keepers and beheld the Primordial Lord seated on His golden throne. On seeing him, the Lord Who loves the Brahmanas got down from His seat, and giving him a seat, honoured him, even as the god honour Himself. When the Brahmana had eaten and rested, He, the Refuge of the good, came to him, and gently chafing his feet with His hands, quietly questioned him. 'Are you, O foremost of worthy Brahmanas, able to discharge your Dharma without much difficulty, and with a mind always contented, in the way that the wise would approve ? The Brahmana who lives contentedly on whatever he can get, without falling away from his Dharma, bestows all blessings on the world. Even the Lord of the gods, if he knows no contentment, keeps constantly flitting from world to world.² But the contented man, even if he be a pauper, happily lays himself down to rest, free from all fever and fret. I humbly bow my head again and again to those Brahmanas who are supremely content³ with what they get by their own efforts, who lead good lives and befriend all that lives, who are free from the ego and at peace with themselves. Does your King attend to your welfare, O Brahmana ?

¹ (lit.) 'she the far corners of whose eyes were dark'. ² (v.r.) 'Even he who is the king of the gods and has gained the worlds of bliss, remains as unhappy as if he had not won them' (S).

³ S. (alt.) 'content in their possession of the Self'.

He whose subjects live happily under his rule is dear to Me. Where do you come from? What brings you here, crossing the sea? And what can we do for you? Let us hear all about it, if it is nothing secret.' Thus kindly questioned by the Supreme Lord, Who had come into this world to play His play, the Brahmana told Him everything (27-36).

Rukmiṇī said :

Hearing Thy glorious virtues sung,
O Beauty's Crown, O Paragon of men,
That through the sluices of the ear
Enter the heart, quenching its cruel smart¹ ;
Hearing that Form Divine admired,
Which is the sum of bliss for eyes that see,
My heart, quite shameless, makes all haste,
O Staunch Support², to lose itself in Thee.

Lives there a maid, O Mukunda,
Of gentle birth, by nature dowered, and true,
Who would not woo, at Hymen's³ call,
Him who, in lineage, virtue, learning, looks,
In youth and wealth and valour, knows
No peer on earth but He Himself ; Who
brings
Joy endless to the minds and hearts
Of all the world ? O, tell me, First of men.

And so I've chosen Thee for spouse,
And into Thy keeping given my soul,
O Lord ; make me Thy wife, my Love ;
Come here and take me, lest the Chedis' King
Come quick and lay his paw on me,
The hero's prize ; as if the jackal dared
To grab the prey that is by right
The lordly lion's share, O Lotus-eyed !

¹ 'anga-tāpam' may be taken as two different words; in which case, 'anga' (in the vocative) would mean 'my dear'. ² This is a rendering of 'Achyuta', which, though used as a proper name for the Lord Vishnu and is in the vocative, seems here to have the connotation the translation assumes, following *J.* ³ (*lit.*) 'at the proper time' i.e., if she has attained age and is fit for marriage.

If He, the Supreme Lord, is pleased
 With aught I've done of good works and of rites,
 Of gifts I've made, and pilgrim rule
 And fasts observed, and worship done to gods,
 To Brahmanas and elders too,
 May Gada's elder brother come and clasp
 My hand in marriage, no one else—
 Not Damaghosha's son, nor other such !

The wedding's on the morrow ; come,
 Invincible, in such wise none may know,
 To Vidarbha, where Thou shalt smash,
 Thy army Chiefs about Thee in the fight,
 The forces that the Chedis' King
 And Magadha's mighty Lord would muster,
 And wrest me from their hands and wed,
 Prowess the bride-price, by the demon-mode.

‘How could I marry Thee whom they
Will keep indoors, unless I slew Thy kin?’
I’ll tell Thee how it may be done;
On wedding eve the new bride goes without
The house, and walks as pilgrim should,
To wait upon the Goddess of her House—
A royal progress that would be—
For to beseech the Mountain-Daughter’s
Grace.

Shouldst Thou, O Lotus-eyed, withhold
From me Thy grace, Thou of Whose lotus feet
The great, like Ūmā's Lord, do yearn
To take the dust and lave themselves therein
To rid them of their ignorance,
I will, with fasting, wear this body out
And die, to take a hundred births,
Doing the same again, to win Thy Grace.

The Brahmana said : ' This, O Lord of the Yadus, is the secret message that I have brought. Consider what should be done, and act forthwith ' (37-44).



CHAPTER LIII

KRISHNA CARRIES OFF RUKMINI

Srī Suka said : Hearing the message from the daughter of the King of the Vidarbhas, the Son of the Yadus took the Brahmana by the hand, and spoke to him with a gentle laugh. The Lord said : ' I, too, think all the time of her, and I cannot sleep of nights. I know that Rukmī, out of spite, stood in the way of her marrying Me. I shall chastise these worthless Kshattriyas in battle and wrest from their hands the flawless beauty who is devoted to Me, as one wins fire out of firewood' (1-3).

Srī Suka went on : The Slayer of Madhu, Who knew the star under which the marriage was to be solemnized, said to the charioteer, ' Get the chariot ready, Dāruka, be quick about it.' And he brought the chariot, to which the horses Saibya, Sugrīva, Meghapushpa and Balāhaka were harnessed, and waited upon Him with joined palms. Getting into the chariot with the Brahmana, Sauri reached the Vidarbhas from Ānarta in a single night, carried by those swift horses. The King of Kundīna, constrained by his affection for his son to give his daughter in marriage to Sīsūpāla, had all the preliminaries done. The city, with its highways, streets and squares swept and watered, was decorated with lovely flags and buntings hoisted on flagstaves, and ornamental arches. It was thronged with men and women who had donned spotlessly clean clothes and were adorned with garlands and scents, flowers, and ornaments, and from its opulent houses came the fragrance of incense. After offering worship to the manes and the gods and honouring the Brahmanas as ordained, he gave them food and got them to pronounce blessings on the bride, her of the lovely teeth, who, after her bath had clad herself in a pair of new muslins, and was adorned with jewels, and wore on her wrist the auspicious wedding string. The best of Brahmanas uttered incantations from the R̥k, Yajus and Sāma Vedas to ward off evil from the bride, while the chief priest, who was well-versed in the Atharva Veda, poured oblations into the

fire for propitiating adverse planets. The King, who had expert knowledge of the rules, gifted to the Brahmanas gold, silver and clothes, and gingelly seed mixed with jaggery, as well as cows (4-13).

Likewise, Damaghosha, the King of Chedi, having had all auspicious rites done for his son by those well versed in the *mantras*, went to Kuṇḍiṇa, taking with him a large force that contained a corps of elephants exuding ichor, and chariots adorned with chains of gold, and large numbers of infantry and cavalry. The Ruler of Vidarbha received him with all honours and had him lodged in a separate residence. And there came to Vidarbha Sālva, Jarāsandha, Dantavakra, Vidūratha, Poundraka and other partisans of the Chedi prince, in their thousands. All these Kings, being enemies of Krishna and Rama, had come with a full complement of forces and mounts, resolved to secure the maid for the prince of Chedi, and to fight Krishna in a body if He should come with Rama and other Yadus to carry her off. Hearing of this rally of the hostile kings, and knowing that Krishna had gone alone with the intention of carrying off the maid, the Lord Rama, who feared a clash, went in all haste to Kuṇḍiṇa, spurred by brotherly affection, taking with Him a large force of elephants, horses, chariots and foot-soldiers (14-21).

The lovely daughter of Bhīshmaka, longing for the coming of Hari, was filled with anxious thought, when the Brahmana was not to be seen : ' Alas for unfortunate me, there is only the night between me and marriage. The Lord of the lotus eyes has not come, and I do not know the reason. Neither has the Brahmana returned, who took my message. Could it be that the Flawless One, having resolved to wed me, saw later something shameful in my conduct that made Him decide against coming ? Or, perhaps, because of my ill-luck the Creator does not favour me, or it may be the Great God ; or, who knows, the goddess Gaurī, the loyal Consort of Rudra and the Mountain-King's daughter, has turned Her face away from me '. As the damsel, whose heart Govinda had captured, thus anxiously reflected, it occurred to her that there was still time, and she closed for a moment her tear-dimmed eyes. When

the bride was eagerly awaiting Govinda's coming, her left thigh, arm and eye throbbed, presaging good. At that moment who should come there but the worthy Brahmana, sent by Krishna, who saw the Princess in the women's apartments. Noticing his glad face and unhurried gait, she, who could read the signs, questioned him with an engaging smile. He told her that the Son of the Yadus was come. And he told her, too, of Krishna's promise to take her away. When she knew that He had come, the daughter of the King of Vidarbha was in bliss, and as she could think of no more acceptable present, she made the Brahmana her humble prostrations (22-31).

On hearing that Rama and Krishna had come to see his daughter wed, Bhīshmaka went forth to receive them, taking with him presents, as the *tūryas* sounded. He duly honoured them with the offering of Madhurparka, splendid apparel and other agreeable presents. Assigning sumptuous quarters to them, the sagacious man entertained them, their army and retinue with fitting hospitality. Similarly he entertained all the assembled Kings according to their power, age, strength and wealth. Hearing that Krishna had come, the people of the capital city of Vidarbha came and drank in the beauty of His lotus face with their eyes as with cupped hands. 'Rukmiṇī should be His wife and none other's; and Rukmiṇī alone deserves to be His wife.¹ And He, the soul of perfection, is the ideal husband for Bhaishmī. If we have done aught of good, pleasing the Creator of the three worlds, may Achyuta by His Grace take the hand of the Vidharba King's daughter in marriage.' So spoke the citizens, their words giving but a hint of their affection (32-39).

And the maid issued from the women's apartments to go to the temple of Ambikā, guarded by warriors. She went on foot to feast her eyes on the tender feet of Bhavānī. With her mind absorbed in contemplation of Mukunda's lotus feet, she walked silently, surrounded

¹ S. in one of his rare (and uncharacteristic) elaborations interprets this in six different ways by various shifts of emphasis on 'eva' (only). The translation could only indicate the central point of them all—that the pair were uniquely matched.

by her mothers¹ and friends, and guarded by the valiant retainers of the King, clad in mail, with upraised weapons in their hands. *Mṛdanga* and conch-shell, *paṇava*, trumpet and drum sounded. Thousands of heterae carrying a multitude of thanks-offerings, Brahmana women, well-adorned, bearing wreaths and perfumes, fine clothes and ornaments, singers and players making music, and chroniclers, bards and minstrels chanting praises, went in the train of the bride. Reaching the fane of the Mother Goddess, she washed her feet and her lotus hands, and took the ceremonial sip of water ; thus purified, she came with a tranquil mind into the presence of Ambikā. Elderly Brahmana women, well-versed in such matters, made her offer her humble supplications to Bhavānī, the Consort of Bhava, Who had Him by Her side. 'I prostrate myself again and again before Thee, O Ambikā, Blessed One, Consort of Siva That hast Thy children about Thee. May the exalted Lord Krishna be my spouse. May Thou² be pleased to grant it !' And she worshipped Her, making various offerings, water, perfumes, unbroken rice, incense, clothes, wreaths, flowers, and jewels, and waving lights. And with similar offerings as well as salt cakes, *pan*, the auspicious bridal neck-string, fruits and sugar-cane, she worshipped married Brahmana women. And the women gave her the sanctified remnants of the offerings with their blessings. And she devoutly received them, making her prostrations to them and to the Goddess (39-49).

Then, her vow of silence discharged, she left the temple of the Goddess, giving her hand, resplendent with its jewelled signet ring, to her companion. As they gazed on her, who had not yet attained age and yet dazzled the senses of even strong-minded men like the Divine Enchantment itself, with her lovely waist, and her face adorned with ear-pendants, the gem-set girdle on her waist, the breasts just beginning to show, the fitting glances that seemed apprehensive of her curled tresses, the lovely smile and teeth like *kunda* buds, crimsoned by the glowing lips that resembled the

¹ 'Mothers'—her mother, and others related as closely. ² S. (*alt.*) 'May Krishna accept me'.

bimba fruit, the while she moved, swan-like, on feet that were lit up by the brightness of the tinkling anklets, the valiant and famous men assembled there swooned under the torment of passion that the sight provoked. When those kings, mounted on elephants, chariots, and horses, looked at her, with that innocent smile and those bashful looks, they were dazed, and they fell from their seats, and their weapons dropped from their hands. And she, ostensibly fulfilling the pilgrim's vow, but really intent on bestowing her loveliness on Hari, moved slowly on feet that looked like flitting lotuses and, pushing aside her curls with the fingers of the left hand, cast shy glances at the Kings who had come, eagerly expecting the exalted Lord ; and then she saw Achyuta. And Krishna caught by the hand the Princess, who would get into the chariot, even as His enemies were looking. Taking her into the chariot with the Garuda flag and flouting the entire cycle of Kshattriyas, like the lion snatching its prey from the midst of jackals, Hari slowly retired, along with Rama and others. The enemy, haughty men who were in the hands of Jarāsandha, could not brook this humiliation, so damaging to their reputation. They cried out, 'Fie on us ! Our renown as bowmen who shoot at sight has been destroyed by cowherds, as though the lion should be humbled by deer !' (50-57).

CHAPTER LIV

KRISHNA WEDS RUKMINI

Srī Suka said : Shouting thus in a tempest of rage, all of them, clad in mail and armed with the bow, got on their mounts, and with their forces set out in pursuit. Seeing them coming on, the chiefs of the Yādava forces turned and took their stand, facing them, and twanging their bows, O King. The enemy, skilled in bowmanship, let fly showers of arrows at those seated on horses, elephants and chariots, like clouds discharging showers on the hills. The lovely lady, seeing her lord's forces veiled by the downpour of arrows, bashfully looked at Him with eyes agitated by fear. Laughingly the Lord assured her, 'Have no fears, O you of the lovely eyes, this very minute you shall see the enemy forces destroyed

by your own.' The heroic Gada and others, who were indignant at the attack, struck down with their arrows the enemy's horse, elephants and chariots. Millions of heads of charioteers, cavalry and elephant-riders tumbled down with their ear-pendants, crowns and turbans; and so did hands grasping swords, maces and bows, forearms, thighs and feet, and the heads of horses, mules, elephants, camels, asses and men (1-8).

Seeing their forces thus destroyed by the Vṛṣṇis intent on victory, the Kings, Jarāsandha and others, retreated. Going up to Siśupāla—who suffered like one whose wife had been abducted, he with his parched face was so lacklustre and dispirited—they said to him, 'Shake off this despondancy, mighty one. Neither joy nor sorrow is the permanent lot of mortals, O King. Just as a wooden puppet fashioned like a woman dances at the will of the puppet-master, so does the world of men act at the will of Īśvara, reaping happiness or misery. I suffered defeat at Sauri's hands seventeen times, even though I commanded twenty-three *akshauhīnīs* before I won a single battle. But I neither grieve nor rejoice, knowing that the world is worsted by time in league with destiny. All of us, captains of mighty warrior hosts, have now suffered defeat at the hands of the Yadus with their small force commanded by Krishna. Our enemies won because time favoured them. We shall defeat them when the time is propitious'. Thus enlightened by his friends, the King of Chedi returned to his city with his followers; and all the other Kings who had escaped slaughter went back to their cities (9-17).

But Rukmī, the strong, who hated Krishna and could not reconcile himself to His marrying his sister by the demon-mode, pursued Him with an army one *akshauhīnī* strong. In the hearing of all the kings, the wrathful Rukmī of the mighty arm, clad in mail and armed with the bow, took a solemn vow saying, 'Without slaying Krishna in battle and rescuing Rukminī, I will not re-enter Kūṇḍina. This I swear to you'. And getting into his chariot he told the charioteer excitedly, 'Take me quick where Krishna is to be found, so that I may give him battle. This day I shall destroy with my sharp

arrows the arrogant strength that made that blockhead of a cowherd carry off my sister by force'. Bragging thus, the fool, who did not know the immeasurable greatness of the Lord, dashed after Govinda in his long chariot, shouting 'Stop, Stop!' Drawing his bow with all his strength, he hit Krishna with three arrows as he called out, 'Tarry a moment, you disgrace to the Yadus, where can you hope to go, having stolen my sister like the thievish crow the sacrificial oblation? I will humble your pride, you dunce, with all your cunning and treacherous tactics. Give up our darling girl, or my arrows shall stretch you on the ground lifeless.' But Krishna with a smile cut his bow; He hit him with six arrows, his four horses with eight, his driver with two and his flag with three. Snatching another bow, he hit Krishna with five arrows. Though struck by them, Achyuta cut that bow with a shower of arrows. He (Rukmī) took up another bow; that too the Imperishable broke. Pestle, trident, spear, sword and buckler, pike, javelin—every weapon that he took up Achyuta smashed. Thereupon, jumping down from his chariot, sword in hand, he ran towards Krishna in a rage, like the moth to the flame, intending to kill Him. The Lord sliced his sword and buckler into a thousand bits with His arrows as he came on, and drew His sharp sword to kill Rukmī (18-31).

When she saw Him preparing to slay her brother, Rukminī, terrified, fell at the feet of her Lord; the faithful spouse cried pitiously, 'O Lord of infinite powers, Unfathomable Soul, O God of Gods, O Master of the Universe, O Lord of the mighty arm, Auspicious One, You must not kill my brother.'

Srī Suka went on: When she, violently trembling from head to foot in fear, clasped His feet, her mouth dry with grief, her throat choking, her necklace of gold slipping down in her extreme agitation, the Compassionate One desisted. Tying up the offender with a piece of cloth, He disfigured him, shaving off his hair and moustaches, leaving patches (32-35).

Meanwhile the Yadu chiefs had pounded the splendid enemy forces like elephants trampling on a lotus bed. Coming to the place where Krishna was, they

beheld Rukmī there in that plight, almost dead. The Lord Sankarshana¹, moved by compassion, released him and said to Krishna. 'You have done wrong, Krishna; it is a detestable thing for us to do. Shaving off the head and moustache of a relation, and disfiguring him, is as bad as inflicting death. You must not be angry with us, good lady, brooding over this disfiguring of your brother. A man reaps but the fruit of his own actions, none else is the cause of his joys or sorrows. No man deserves death at the hands of a relation, even if his offence calls for death. He should be let off; why slay him again, who has been slain by his own wrongdoing? This is the Kshattriya code ordained by the Progenitor—a horrid one, but still Dharma—under which brother may kill brother. Haughty men intoxicated with power strike down others for the sake of dominion, land, wealth or women, or to satisfy their pride, to vaunt their prowess or from some such motive (36-41).

'But it would be wrong of you to discriminate among living beings, as the ignorant do, by wishing that enemies should always suffer misfortune and that friends should always prosper. It is due to the delusion induced by the Lord's Power of Māyā in the minds of those who identify the body with the Self, that they look upon some as their well-wishers, some as inimical, and others as neutral towards them. The soul in its pristine purity is one and the same in all men. It is seen as many by the ignorant, just as the luminaries, or the sky, seems to them many. The body, being constituted of substance, life-breath and *gunas*², has a beginning and an end; being superimposed on the soul by nescience, it involves the *jīva* in the transmigratory cycle. In truth the soul is neither united with nor parted from anything else, my good lady; for these other things do not really exist; their phenomenal appearance being due to the soul, just as the eye and the forms it perceives both derive their power of illumination from the sun. Changes such as birth, and so on, pertain to the body, not the soul, just as it is the digits of the moon that are subject to vicissitudes, not the moon itself; and death affects the

¹ Balarama alternately chides Krishna and consoles Rukmīni.

² See Notes.

soul no more than Amāvāsyā does the moon. Just as the dreamer looks upon his dream-self, the objects of its enjoyment, and the act of enjoyment itself as real, though the whole thing is unreal, likewise the man who is in the grip of nescience is involved in the transmigratory life. Therefore, expelling by means of the knowledge of the truth, the grief caused by ignorance, which dims and deludes the mind, be your serene self again, O you of the engaging smile' (42-49).

Sri Suka said: Thus enlightened by the exalted Lord Rama, the lovely woman shed her unhappiness and set her mind at ease by dispassionate thinking. Let off with his life by his enemies, his forces destroyed, his lustre diminished, his hopes frustrated, Rukmī, brooding on his disfigurement, vowed, 'Without killing the wicked Krishna and taking back my younger sister, I will not enter Kundina'; and he resentfully stayed on where he was¹ (50-52).

The Lord, having thus vanquished the Kings, brought Bhīshmaka's daughter to the city and married her with all due rites, O best of the Kurus. Then in every house in the city of the Yadus the people, who gave all their love to Krishna, the Lord of the Yadus, held high festival, O King. Glad men and women, wearing sumptuous jewelled ear-pendants, brought presents to the beautifully attired bride and bridegroom. The city of the Vrishnis presented a splendid appearance, with its Indra's banners hoisted high on flagstaves, its beautiful festoons of flowers, cloths and gems, the auspicious symbols of welcome set out at every door, the full water-pots, the incense of aloes, and lights. Its roads were well-watered, and it looked beautiful, with its house-fronts decorated with plantain and areca saplings, which the elephants, exuding ichor, of friendly kings who were invitees, caught at in passing. The Kurus, Śrījāyas, Kaikeyas, Vidarbhas, Yadus and Kuntis were very happy, thus meeting amidst the bustling gaiety of their kith and kin. Hearing of the carrying off of Rukminī, which everybody was talking about, the kings and princesses marvelled.

¹ Here he established a city and named it Bhojakata, according to a half-verse found in some mss.

Seeing Krishna, the Consort of Sri, united with Rukmiṇī, who was none other than Ramā Herself, there was great rejoicing in Dvārakā among the city folk, O King (53-60).

CHAPTER LV

THE BIRTH OF PRADYUMNA

Sri Suka said : Kāma, the Lord of Love, an *amsa* of Vāsudeva, who had in the far past been burnt by the wrath of Rudra, attained again a physical body through Him (Vāsudeva). He was born to Krishna of the daughter of the King of Vidarbha and was known to fame as Pradyumna; he was in no way inferior to his father. Knowing him to be his enemy, Sambara, who could take any form at will, carried off the infant within ten days of his birth, threw him into the sea, and went home. A huge fish swallowed him. It was caught in a great net along with other fish. The fishermen took it to Sambara as a present. The wonder fish was brought to the kitchen, where it was cut open. Seeing the child in the belly, they gave him to Māyāvati. While she was puzzling over it, Nārada came and told her all about the child—who he was, who his parents, and how he came to be in the belly of the fish. She herself was the famed Rati, the faithful spouse of Kāma; while prayerfully looking forward to her burnt husband's acquiring a new body, she was employed by Sambara to superintend the kitchen. Learning that he was the god Kāma, she lavished her love on the child. Krishna's son quickly grew to manhood, and fascinated all the women who saw him. Rati, looking with a bashful smile from under arched eyebrows at her Lord, peerless among men for his beauty, with his eyes long as lotus petals, and his long arms, made amorous overtures to him, my good sir. The great Lord, Krishna's son, said to her, 'Mother, your behaviour is unnatural. You display feelings unbecoming in a mother, you conduct yourself like a wanton' (I-II).

Rati answered : 'You, my lord, are Narayana's son, abducted from your home by Sambara. I am your lawful wife, Rati; you, my lord, are Kāma. This Asura Sambara threw you into the sea when you were

not ten days old ; a fish swallowed you ; rescued from its belly, you were brought here, my lord. You must kill this formidable foe of yours, whose defeat will not be easy, since he is the master of a million magic tricks ; you should resort to magic too to confuse and bewilder him. Your mother weeps for you, like the osprey for her lost young. Because of her great love for her son, she is distraught and miserable, like a cow deprived of her calf' (12-15).

Having thus explained herself, Māyāvati imparted to the mighty Pradyumna the secret lore, Mahāmāyā, which could overcome all delusive magic. He went up to Sambara, and challenged him to a fight, provoking him with intolerable abuse. Thus insulted and reviled, he came out, like a serpent kicked with the foot, red-eyed with anger, and armed with the mace. Swinging his mace with all his force, he hurled it at the mighty Pradyumna with a shout that crashed on the ear like thunder. The Lord Pradyumna struck down the flying mace with his own, and in a rage hurled his weapon at the enemy, O King. The Asura stationed himself in the sky, and using the magic arts that Maya had taught the Asuras, let fall a shower of arrows on Krishna's son. Assailed by the flood of arrows, the great charioteer, Rukmiṇī's son, employed the Mahāvidyā, of the nature of pure *Sattva*, destroyer of all magic weapons. Then the Asura despatched hundreds of spectral figures of Guhyakas, Gandharvas, ghouls, snakes and demons. Destroying them all, Krishna's son drew his sharp sword, and by his superior strength cut off Sambara's head, with its red beard, crown and ear-pendants. Heaps of flowers were showered on him by the celestials as they sang his praises. His wife, who could fly by air, took him to his city (16-25).

He came down from the sky with his wife, like a cloud accompanied by lightning, into the most splendid of the women's apartments, crowded with hundreds of fair women, O King. On seeing him, who was dark as a rain-cloud, clad in yellow silks, with his long arms, his eyes of a warm red, his engaging smile and lovely lotus face adorned with black ringlets like bees, the women took him for Krishna, and bashfully hid themselves

wherever they happened to be. But discovering their mistake in a little while, from some slight difference they noticed, they crowded round him and that jewel among women in happy wonderment. The sweet-spoken, dark-eyed daughter of the King of Vidharbha, who was there, remembered then the son that she had lost, as her breasts streamed with milk from love. 'Who can this best of men be? Whose son is the lotus-eyed one? Who was the mother that bore him? And who is this woman whom he has with him? The son I lost, stolen from the confinement chamber, should now be of the same age and appearance, if he is alive somewhere. But how did this one come to resemble the Wielder of the Sārṅga bow, in stature, limb, and gait, in the sound of his voice, the way he laughs and looks? Maybe he is the child that I bore in my womb; for I feel a great love for him, and my left arm throbs' (26-34).

As she was thus debating within herself, the illustrious son of Devakī came there with Devakī and Ānaka-
 dundubhi. The Lord Janārdana, though He knew all about it, was silent. And Nārada related to them the whole story, beginning with the abduction by Sambara. When they heard that astonishing account, Krishna's womenfolk welcomed him, who had come back, after being lost for many years, like one raised from the dead. Devakī and Vasudeva, Krishna and Rama, Rukmini and the other women embraced the couple and rejoiced. It is said that the people of Dvārakā, on hearing that the lost Pradyumna had come back, happily exclaimed, 'Ah! Heaven be thanked, the child has returned from death, as it were!' That his own mothers, often mistaking him for their lord, whose spit and image he was, hastened to him in secret, drawn by love, is not to be wondered at, much less that other women did so; considering that he was the true reflection of the Lord Who is the Abode of Rāmā and was himself the god of love, one who fills the heart with a tumult at the very thought of him, and was now present in the flesh before their eyes (35-40).

CHAPTER LVI

LOSS AND RECOVERY OF THE SYAMANTAKA

Sri Suka said : Satrājīṭ, who had wronged Krishna, gave him his daughter in marriage of his own accord, as well as the Syamantaka gem (1).

The King asked : 'How had Satrājīṭ wronged Krishna, O Brahman? From whom had he got the Syamantaka? And why did he give his daughter to Hari?' (2).

Sri Suka said : The sun-god was the bosom friend of Satrājīṭ, his devotee. Pleased with him, he affectionately gave him the Syamantaka gem. Wearing it on his neck and shining like the sun, he entered Dvārakā; he was not recognised, because of that dazzling splendour, O King. Seeing him from afar, the people, blinded by that brilliance, took him for the sun-god himself; and they went and spoke to the exalted Lord, Who was playing dice. They said, 'Salutations to Thee, O Narayana, Bearer of the conch-shell, mace and discus. O Damodara of the lotus eyes, O Govinda, Delight of the Yadus, here is the sun-god himself, he of the fierce rays, come to see Thee, O Lord of the worlds, blinding men's eyes with his shining orb. It is well known that the foremost of the gods are always seeking Thee in the three worlds. Having discovered that Thou livest now among the Yadus, unknown to the world, the sun comes to see Thee, O Lord' (3-8).

Sri Suka said : On hearing those artless words, the Lotus-eyed laughed heartily and told them, 'It is not the sun-god that is coming, but Satrājīṭ, lit up by the gem'. Entering his opulent home with festive celebrations and auspicious rites, Satrājīṭ had the gem installed by Brahmanas in the chamber of worship. Every day that gem produces eight loads of pure gold, my lord. Where the gem is kept and worshipped, there occurs neither famine nor premature death; calamities, serpents, bodily and mental ills and other causes of suffering do not raise their heads there, nor do crafty men. Though requested by Sauri to give the gem to the King of the Yadus, he would not consent to it, being so much in

love with wealth that he did not stop a moment to think of the consequences of turning down the request (9-12).

Once Prasena¹, wearing the dazzling gem on his neck, went hunting in the forest on horseback. A lion killed Prasena and his horse, snatched the gem and entered a mountain, where it was killed by Jāmbavān for the sake of the gem. And he hung up the gem as a plaything for his son in his cave. Satrājī, missing his brother, made lamentation, saying, 'I am almost certain that my brother, who had gone to the forest, wearing the gem on his neck, was done to death by Krishna'. And hearing that, men began talking about it in whispers. When it reached His ears, the Lord Who wished to remove the stain upon His reputation, followed the track of Prasena, the citizens accompanying Him. The people saw Prasena and his horse lying dead in the forest, killed by the lion, and on the top of the mountain they found the body of the lion, slain by the bear (13-18).

Stopping the people outside, the Lord entered alone the frightful cave of the king of the bears wrapped in impenetrable darkness. Seeing there that superb gem used as a plaything for the child, He went into the cave and stopped near the child to remove the gem. On seeing Him, a stranger, the nurse cried out in alarm. Hearing her cry, Jāmbavān, foremost of doughty fighters, rushed in in a great wrath. Not knowing the prowess of the Lord, and looking upon Him as an ordinary man, he angrily fought with his own master. It was a fierce duel that went on night and day without rest for twenty-eight days, each bent upon victory, and fighting like hawks for flesh, using rocks and trees and bare hands, the doubled fists falling with the shock of lightning. He (Jāmbavān), all his ligaments limp from the hammering of Krishna's fist, his strength gone, his body bathed in a lather of sweat, said, greatly marvelling, 'I now know Thee. Thou art the life in all creatures, the virility, grit and strength. Thou art Vishnu, the Primordial Lord, the All-Prevailing, the Lord Paramount of the universe. Thou art the cause of the creators' coming into being, and the substance of the world of created things. Thou art Time, chief of the driving urges. Thou art the

¹ Satrājī's brother.

Overlord of the universe, and the Soul of all souls. I know Thou art He, a brief glance shot from the tail-end of Whose irate eye made the ocean give Him way, its crocodiles and great fish being thrown into a panic; He Who built a bridge that is a standing monument to His fame, and set Lanka ablaze, and with His arrows, severed the heads of the Rākshasa, which tumbled down' (19-22).

Seeing that the king of the bears had realized the truth about Himself, the exalted Lord Achyuta, the lotus-eyed son of Devaki, spoke to his devotee in a voice¹ charged with love, as He gently stroked his body, O King, with that healing hand out of His abundant grace. 'We came to the cave for the gem, O lord of the bears, and I entered it, wishing to clear myself of a false imputation by producing the gem'. Thus told, he was happy to honour Krishna, by bestowing on Him his maiden daughter Jāmbavati, as well as the gem (29-32).

Having waited for twelve days, the citizens had gone back to the city grieving, since Krishna did not come out of the cave that He had entered. Hearing of that, the lady Devaki, Rukmiṇi, Ānakadundubhi, their friends and relations all mourned Him. Cursing Satrājī, the grieving citizens of Dvārakā went to the temple of Durgā Mahāmāyā² and prayed that they might soon have Krishna back with them. As they returned from the worship of the Devi with Her blessings, Hari, having achieved His purpose, appeared with his wife before them, to their great joy. With Hrshikeśa back among them, with the gem on His neck, and a wife with Him, they all rejoiced, as would people over somebody who had returned from the dead (33-37).

Sending for Satrājī, the Lord related in the assembly, in the presence of the King, how the gem was recovered, and handed it over to him. Hanging down his head in shame, he received the gem and went home, full of remorse for his offence. He brooded over it, and greatly perturbed at having quarrelled with the powerful one, debated within himself, 'How shall I expiate my

¹ Many of the glosses read 'megha' for 'prema' (in a voice deep as thunder). ² Here called Chandrabhāgā (S).

offence and gain Achyuta's pardon? How shall I secure my safety? What can I do, so that people may not curse me for a short-sighted fool, stingy and avaricious? I shall give him my daughter, that jewel among women, as well as the gem. That would be the right way to pacify him, there is no other'. Having thus resolved, Satrājīt bestowed on Krishna, of his own accord, his beautiful daughter and the gem. The Lord married with all due rites Satyabhāmā who was notable for her virtue, beauty and other good qualities, and whose hand had been sought by many. But the Lord told him, O King, 'I will not accept the gem. Let it be with you, the devotee of the god; we shall still be sharing in the benefits' (38-45).

CHAPTER LVII AKRŪRA AND THE GEM

Srī Suka said : Hearing that the Pāṇdavas and Kuntī had been burnt to death, Govinda, though He knew the truth, went with Rama to the Kuru country to offer their condolences on behalf of the family. Meeting Bhīṣma, Kṛpa, Vidura, Gāndhārī and Drōṇa, who sorrowed like them, they lamented, 'Alas, what a tragedy!' Seizing the opportunity, Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā said to Sata-dhanvā, 'Why do you not take the gem? Why should not Satrājīt, who, having promised her to us, gave that jewel of a daughter to Krishna, treating us with contempt, be despatched after his brother?' Thus seduced by them, the wicked rogue, whose days were numbered, killed Satrājīt in his sleep, coveting his property. Slaughtering him like a butcher of beasts, while the women raised an outcry and wailed helplessly, he made off with the gem. Satyabhāmā, seeing her father slain, was overwhelmed with grief, and bewailed him, crying distractedly, 'O father, father! Alas, I am undone!' Placing the dead body in a tub of oil, she went to Gajāhvaya and burning with grief, told Krishna, Who knew, of the killing of her father. When they heard that, both of them, the Paramount Lords, conducting themselves like ordinary men, lamented with tears in their eyes, 'Alas, what a misfortune to fall upon us!' (1-9).

Returning to the city with His wife and elder brother, the Lord made preparations to slay Satadhanvā and seize the jewel. Coming to know of Krishna's endeavours, he was in a panic, and he sought Kṛtavarmā's help to save himself. But the latter told him, 'I will not flout the supremely powerful Rama and Krishna! Who could be safe, having offended those two, incurring whose enmity Kamsa was deserted by fortune and with all his followers lost his life, while Jarāsandha had to flee from the battlefield seventeen times, deprived even of his chariot?' Thus rebuffed by him, he begged Akrūra for his help. But he too told him, 'Knowing the strength of the Supreme Lords, who would make enemies of them? Salutations to Him Who creates, protects and destroys the universe in play, and Whose ways baffle even the lords of creation, deluded by His Māyā; Who as a seven-year-old boy uprooted the mountain and bore it on one hand, as a child might a mushroom—salutations to Him, the exalted Lord Krishna of the marvellous deeds, the supreme Ātman, the First Cause, Who knows neither end nor change' (10-17).

When he too thus refused help, Satadhanvā entrusted the gem to him and fled, mounted on a horse that could go a hundred *yojanas*. Getting into the chariot with the Garuda flag, the brothers Rama and Janārdana pursued with exceedingly fleet horses the murderer of their respected relative. Abandoning his fallen horse in the wood on the outskirts of Mithilā, he fled on foot in terror, and Krishna in His wrath pursued him. Going after him on foot, because he was on foot, the Lord cut off his head with the sharp-edged discus and searched his clothes for the gem. Not finding it, Krishna returned to His elder brother and told Him, 'I have killed Satadhanvā to no purpose. The gem is not to be found on him.' Bala answered, 'Without a doubt, Satadhanvā has left the gem with somebody. Go back to the city and look for it. I wish to see the King of the Videhas, my much-loved friend'. Saying that, the son of the Yadus entered Mithilā. On seeing Him, the King of Mithilā sprang up from his seat in joy, and received with all honours Him to whom all honour was due. The Lord lived in Mithilā for some years, entertained

with every mark of respect by the high-souled Janaka, who loved Him. It was then that the son of Dhṛtarāshtra, seizing the opportunity, learnt from Him the art of fighting with the mace (18-26).

The Lord Keśava, returning to Dvārakā, told his beloved wife, wishing to please her, of the killing of Satadhanvā and the failure to find the gem. Then the Lord, along with His friends, had the obsequies done for his slain relative. Hearing of the slaying of Satadhanvā, Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā, his instigators, were terrified, and they fled Dvārakā. When Akrūra had gone elsewhere, many misfortunes overtook the people of Dvārakā, and they experienced bodily and mental sufferings as well as others caused by natural forces and by the gods. So, my good sir, say some, forgetting all that has been said before. How could any place be visited by misfortune, where He lives, in Whom the sages have their being? 'Once, long ago, when the Lord of the gods withheld his showers from Kāśi, its Ruler gave away his daughter Gāndhinī in marriage to Svaphalka, who came there; thereupon the god sent down showers again for the Kāśi region. Wherever Akrūra, his son, who possesses the same powers, lives, there the god sends down plenty of rain, and fevers and poxes are not known there.' So said the old men. Janārdana, Who heard what they were saying, knew that that was not the only cause, but He sent for Akrūra and spoke to him. Receiving him with all marks of honour, He conversed long and affably with him. And then He, Who looks into the hearts of all men, said to him with a smile, 'O Dānapati, we have known all along that the opulent gem was with you, having been deposited by Satadhanvā. As Satrājīt had no son, his daughter's sons should inherit his estate, after making water libations and offerings of cooked food to his manes, and discharging his debts. Nevertheless let the gem remain with you, who are strict in your vows; it would not be easy for others to keep it as it should be kept. But in this matter of the gem my elder brother does not believe me. Show as the gem, and restore peace among your relations, magnanimous one. (We all know that) you are constantly

engaged in the performance of sacrifices on altars of gold' (27-39).

Touched by these conciliatory words, the son of Svaphalka brought the gem, blazing like the sun, hidden in his clothes and gave it to Him. Showing the Syaman-taka to His kinsmen and clearing Himself of the false accusation, the Lord gave the gem back to him. He who reads, hears recited, or meditates on this story of the exalted and supreme Lord Vishnu, which reveals His prowess, dispels sins and confers all good, will free himself forthwith from ill-repute and attain peace of mind (40-42).

CHAPTER LVIII

KRISHNA'S OTHER WIVES

Sri Suka said : Once the gracious Lord, the foremost of men, went, accompanied by Yuyudhāna and others, to Indraprastha to see the Pāṇdavas, who had again been seen in public.¹ On seeing Mukunda, the Supreme Lord, all the heroic sons of Pṛthā rose in a body, like the senses reviving when the life-breath returns. Their sins destroyed by embracing Achyuta, they rejoiced, looking at His face with its loving smile. He prostrated Himself at the feet of Yudhishtira and Bhīma, and embraced Phālguna, while the twins prostrated themselves before Him. When Krishna had taken the seat of honour, the flawless Krishnā (Draupadī), with the bashfulness of the newly wed, came hesitantly and paid her reverence to Him. Sātyaki too took his seat, having been welcomed with all marks of respect by the son of Pṛthā. And the others, duly welcomed, disposed themselves round them. Going up to Pṛthā, He made His prostrations to her, and she, her eyes moist with intense affection, embraced Him and enquired after their relations. And He was solicitous about the welfare of herself, his father's sister, and of her daughter-in-law. Her voice choking with the love that overmastered her, her eyes full of tears as she remembered her many tribulations, she said to Him, Who shows Himself to His devo-

¹ At the court of Drupada, after they had been reported to have lost their lives when the house of lac was burnt.

tees to banish their sorrows.¹ 'The moment you, remembering us, your relations, sent my brother, O Krishna, that moment all was well with us, and we had found a protector. You, the well-wisher of the universe, its very Soul, are not deluded by such notions as "mine" and "not mine". But, being seated in the hearts of all, you always destroy the sorrows of those that remember you.' And Yudhishtira said: 'I know not what meritorious thing we did, O Supreme Lord, that it should have been given to us, men of mean understanding, to see face to face Him Whom even the great masters of yoga cannot hope to see easily' (1-12).

At the request of the King, the Lord spent the rainy months at Indraprastha, bringing joy to the eyes of the citizens. One day, Vijaya, destroyer of the enemy hosts, put on coat of mail, and armed with his Gāndīva and exhaustless quivers, went with Krishna, riding in his chariot with the monkey flag, to hunt in the dense forest teeming with wild beasts and deer. He brought down with his arrows tigers, boars, buffaloes, antelope, 'śarabhas', 'gavayas', rhinoceroses, deer, hares and porcupines. Servitors took to the King such of the slaughtered animals as were fit for offering in the sacrifices at the changes of the moon. Feeling thirsty and tired, Arjuna went to the Yamunā. When those great warriors, the two Krishnas, had bathed and drunk of its crystal waters, they saw a lovely damsel walking there. Phālguna, sent by his companion, approached the splendid woman, who was very beautiful, with large hips, fine teeth and a taming face; and he asked her, 'Who may you be, O you of the lovely waist? Whose daughter are you? Where do you come from, and what are you here for? I should imagine that you wish to wed. Please tell me all about it, fair one' (13-17).

Kālīndī answered: 'I am the daughter of the sun-god. Desiring to get Vishnu, the All-Highest, Who grants all desires, to espouse me, I have been practising rigorous austerities. I will not wed, O valiant one, any one but Him Who is the abode of all that is auspicious. May the exalted Lord Mukunda, the Refuge of the help-

¹ S. (alt.) 'Who reveals Himself in the mind that is no longer troubled by nescience and sorrow.'

less, be propitious to me. I am known as Kālindī, and I live in a mansion built by my father in the water of the Yamunā, and I shall be there till I see Achyuta face to face.' Gudākeśa reported this to Vāsudeva. And He, Who had known it all along, took her into the chariot, and they returned to King Dharma (18-23).

The moment He had been requested in this behalf by the sons of Prthā, Krishna had had a marvellous and beautiful city built for them by Viśvakarmā. Staying on there for the pleasure of His own folk, the Lord had served Arjuna as charioteer when the latter offered up the Khāndava forest to the god of fire. And the god, pleased with him, had given Arjuna a bow, white horses, a chariot, two inexhaustible quivers, and a coat of mail that no bowman could pierce. Maya, who had been saved from the fire, had built as a present for his friend the assembly hall where Duryodhana fell into the error of taking dry ground for water and *vice versa*. Taking leave of him (Arjuna), and with the good wishes of friends He returned to Dvārakā with Sātyaki and the rest. Then, in the auspicious season, on a day when the planets and the ruling constellation were favourable, He married Kālindī, making His own people happy, and furthering their welfare (24-29).

Vinda and Anuvinda, rulers of Avantī, being under the thumb of Duryodhana, forbade their sister to choose in a 'bride's choice' Krishna, whom she loved. Krishna carried off by force Mitravindā, who was the daughter of His paternal aunt Rājādhidevi, under the very eyes of the assembled Kings, O King (30-31).

Nagnajit, King of Kosala, was a very righteous man. He had a daughter, the radiant Satyā, who was also known as Nāgnajitī, O King. No king could marry her without first subduing seven bulls, which were sharp-horned, unapproachable and vicious, and would not tolerate so much as the smell of a valiant man. Hearing that she was to be won by one who could tame the bulls, the Lord of the Sātvatas went to the city of the King of the Kosalas with a big army. The delighted King of Kosala went forth to meet Him and received Him with all honours; he offered Him a seat, and made Him valuable presents, evoking Śrī Krishna's appreciation. The

King's daughter, seeing that a bridegroom after her own heart was come, desired the Lord of Ramā with a great desire; and she prayed, 'If I have sought with austerities to win His heart, may He become my spouse, making my pure wishes come true. How could I hope to please Him, the Supreme Lord, the dust of Whose lotus feet the Goddess Śrī, the Lotus-born, Girīśa and the Guardians of the worlds receive on their heads, and Who from time to time playfully assumes a body, to safeguard the norms of Dharma that He has established?' (32-37).

Having duly honoured Him, the King asked, 'O Narayana, Lord of the worlds, what can I, lowest of the low, do for One who is filled with the Bliss of the Self?' Śrī Suka said: The exalted Lord was pleased with him; and taking the offered seat, He answered him with a smile in a voice deep as thunder, O son of the Kurus. The Lord said: 'O King, wise men condemn begging even by the ordinary Kshatriya who is faithful to his own Dharma. However, being desirous of securing your friendship, I request you to give me your daughter in marriage; we offer no bride's money' (38-40).

The King replied: 'Who, O Lord, could be more desirable as a bridegroom than you, sole repository of all the virtues, to whose breast cleaves the eternal Śrī Herself? But we, O best of Sātvatas, desiring to choose the best man for my maid, long ago laid down a condition, to test the prowess of suitors. Here are seven bulls, O valiant one, that are untamed and intractable. Many princes have been maimed by them, and had their limbs broken. If you, O son of the Yadus, should subdue them, you would be most acceptable to me as a husband for my daughter, O Lord of Śrī' (41-44).

Coming thus to learn of the test, the Lord girded up His loins, and manifesting Himself as seven different persons, effortlessly caught the bulls. Tying them up with ropes, their pride gone from them, their strength mastered, Sauri dragged them after Him playfully as a child might drag toy bulls made of wood. Thereupon the King, who was amazed, gladly gave his daughter away in marriage to Krishna. And the Lord with all due rites took her to wife, who was in every way worthy

of Him. The King's spouses rejoiced at having got Krishna as husband for their daughter, who loved Him. There were great festivities. Amidst the din of conch and drum and kettle-drum were heard song and music and the blessings pronounced by the Brahmanas. Men and women clad in their finery, and adorned with wreaths, gave themselves up to joy. The King gave as bride-presents ten thousand milch cows and three thousand maids, sumptuously clad and wearing gold necklaces, nine thousand elephants, a hundred times as many chariots, horses numbering a hundred times the number of chariots, and foot-soldiers, a hundred times as numerous as the horses. The King of Kosala, his heart melting with love, put the wedded couple in their chariot, and with a great army to follow them, sent them on their way (45-52).

When they heard of that, the kings, for all that they had been worsted by the Yadus and by the bulls, could not brook the humiliation; they intercepted Him on the way as He was taking His bride home. When they started discharging showers of arrows, Arjuna, armed with the Gāndīva, and eager to please his relative, put them to flight as the lion does the lesser beasts. Taking the presents with Him, the exalted Lord, the son of Devaki, foremost of the Yadus, reached Dvārakā and lived happily with Satyā (53-55).

Krishna married Bhadrā of Kekaya, daughter of Srutakīrti, His father's sister, whom her brothers Santardana and the rest, gave away. And at a 'bride's choice' He carried off, all by Himself, as Suparṇa had carried off the nectar, Lakshmanā, daughter of the King of Madra, who was endowed with all auspicious marks. And Krishna had thousands of other such wives, beautiful women whom Naraka had kept in confinement and whom He rescued after slaying him (56-58).

CHAPTER LIX

THE SLAYING OF NARAKĀSURA

The King asked: 'How and why was Bhauma (Naraka), who kept those women in confinement, killed by the Lord? Tell me of this exploit of the Wielder of the Śārṅga.'

Srī Suka said : The exalted Lord, acquainted with Bhauma's doings by Indra, whose umbrella of state he had carried off, whose mother he had deprived of her ear-pendants, and who had himself been ousted by him from his seat¹ on the Mountain of the Immortals (Meru), went riding on Garuda's back, with His wife, to Prāgjyotishapuram which was inaccessible because of the impenetrable mountains, the fortified places filled with armed men, and other barriers of water, fire and wind all around it, and cordoned off by thousands of Mura's strong and frightful chains. He hacked His way through the mountains with His mace, reduced the fastnesses with His arrows, put down with His discus the fire, water and wind, and sundered with His sword the chains of Mura. By blowing on His conch-shell the **Wielder** of the Mace shattered the engines of war and the hearts of bold men, and with His doughty mace He brought down the ramparts (2-5).

On hearing the booming of the conch-shell Pāñchajanya, terrifying as the din of thunder at the world's ending, the Asura Mura of the five heads, who lay in the water,² started up. With his trident raised high in his hand, he who was so frightful in appearance, flaming like the sun and the fire at the world's dissolution, that none could bear to look at him, rushed to the attack, like the serpent turning upon Garuda, with his five mouths wide open, as though he would gobble up the three worlds. Swinging his trident for a throw and hurling it at Garuda with all his strength, he let off a roar out of his five mouths ; that terrific din filled heaven and earth, the upper air and all the quarters as well as the nether regions ; it enveloped the cosmos. Hari by His superior strength cut into three pieces with His arrows the trident as it sped towards Garuda ; and hit his open mouths with more. He (Mura) hurled his club at Him in a rage. The elder brother of Gada countered it with a blow from His own mace that shivered it into a thousand bits. Then, as he rushed upon Him with upraised arms, the Invincible cut off his heads with the discus, it was child's play to Him. His heads

¹ The jewelled peak called 'Mandara.' • Of the moat (S.)

severed, he fell into the water dead, like a mountain with its peak riven by the might of Indra (6-11).

His seven sons, agonised at the killing of their father, rallied wrathfully to wreak vengeance. They were Tāmra, Antariksha, Sravana, Vibhāvasu, Vasu and Nabhaswān, and Aruṇa, who was the seventh. As directed by Bhauma, they went forth fully armed to do battle, led by Peetha, the Commander-in-Chief. Coming up with the Invincible, they attacked Him in a blaze of anger, using arrows, swords, maces, pikes, double-edged swords and spears. The exalted Lord, irresistible in His power, smashed to smithereens with His arrows that entire body of weapons. And He despatched Peetha and the rest to the abode of Death, severing their heads, thighs, arms, feet and coats of mail. When he saw the commanders of his forces destroyed by Achyuta's discus and arrows, Naraka, the son of the earth-goddess, was mad with rage; he sallied forth, with sea-born tuskiers streaming with ichor. Beholding Krishna mounted on Garuda with His consort, like a cloud with lightning on top of the sun, he hurled his *śataghnī* at Him; simultaneously his forces attacked Him in a body. In an instant, the exalted Lord, the elder brother of Gada, had reduced that army of Bhauma to shambles, His sharp arrows winged with a variety of quills, hacking down the arms, thighs, heads, necks and bodies of the fighters, and slaughtering his horses and elephants. And, having done this, O best of the Kurus, Hari cut down with His sharp arrows, three for one, all the weapons, physical and magical, that the fighters had aimed at Him, while Suparaṇ, on whom He was mounted, beat down the tuskiers with his wings. Assailed by Garuda with his beak, wings and talons, the elephants fled to the city in distress (12-18).

But Naraka went on fighting. When he saw his army on the run, sore pressed by Garuda, Bhauma attacked Him with his powerful lance that had repelled Indra's thunderbolt. But He was no more shaken by the blow than an elephant hit by a garland. Thus foiled, he snatched his trident to attack Achyuta. But before he could throw it, Hari had cut off with the sharp-edged discus the head of Naraka, as he was seated on

his tusker. Fallen on the earth, it shone with its ear-pendants, its beautiful crown, and ornaments. The sages and the great gods shouted 'Ha ! Ha ! Well done !' and showered flowers on Mukunda and praised Him (20-22).

Then the earth-goddess came and delivered to Krishna the two dazzling ear-pendants of burnished gold set with gems, and the Vaijayantī as well as the garland of wild flowers, and also the umbrella of Varuṇa and the jewelled mountain crest (the Mandara). And the goddess, making her prostrations to Him, praised the Lord of the universe, Who is worshipped by the foremost gods, with joined palms, her mind wrapt in adoration (23-24).

The earth-goddess said : 'Salutations to Thee, O paramount Lord of the gods, Wielder of the conch, the discus and the mace. Salutations to Thee, O Ruler of all hearts, That takest the form that appeals most to Thy devotees. I offer my adorations to Thee of the lotus navel, Who wearest the lotus garland, Whose eyes are like the lotus, Whose feet bear the lotus mark. I make my prostrations to Thee That art the exalted Lord, Vāsudeva and Vishnu, Primordial Spirit, Cause of all causes, perfect Wisdom ; to Thee That knowest no birth, being the Limitless Brahma, and art too the Omnipotent Creator of all that is. I adore Thee That art the Soul and Creator of all things living, past and present, high and low, as well as of the inanimate worlds, and That art the Paramātman too. For it is Thou, O Lord of the universe, That createst in unlimited quantities *rajas* for the creation, *tamas* for the destruction, and *sattva* for the protection of the universe, Thyself remaining unobscured by these activities. Thou are Kāla (time), Pradhāna, and Puruṣa, and yet distinct from them all. Myself, water, fire, air, *ākāśa*, the subtle elements, the gods, the mind and the senses, the ego, and *Mahat*—all these, constituting the world of animate and inanimate things, are illusions, O Lord, grounded in Thee, the One without a second. O Lord That succourest those that throw themselves on Thy mercy, this is his son, who goes in fear of Thee. I have brought him here to fall at Thy feet. Vouchsafe him Thy protection,

placing on his head the lotus hand that removes all stain' (25-31).

Sri Suka said : Thus besought by the earth-goddess in appealing words, with humble devotion, He reassured her and promised him His protection, and then entered Bhauma's house, with its abounding opulence. There Hari saw the Kshattriya women, sixteen thousand¹ in number, whom Bhauma had carried off by force, vanquishing many kings. When He entered, and they saw that hero among men, their hearts were ravished, and they mentally chose Him as the loved husband whom Providence had sent. 'May He be my spouse, May the Dispenser of destinies grant this !': with this prayer every one of them surrendered her heart in love to Krishna. He sent them, clad in spotless raiment, after a bath, to Dvāravatī by palanquin, and He also sent much-prized treasure, chariots, horses and large quantities of wealth. Keśava had sixty-four fleet-footed, four-tusked elephants of the pedigree of Airāvata also sent there (32-37).

He went on to the mansion of the Lord of the gods, and gave the ear-pendants to Aditi ; and He was honoured, along with His beloved consort, by the Ruler of the gods and Indrāṇī. Urged by His spouse, He uprooted the *pārijāta* tree, mounted it on Garuda's back and, inflicting a defeat on the gods headed by Indra, brought it to His own city. It was planted in the garden of Satyabhāmā's mansion for its adornment, and the bees from the world of the gods followed it, being greatly addicted to its fragrance and honey. With head bent low, and the top of his crown touching Achyuta's feet, he had begged Him to secure for him what he greatly desired. But, when his purpose had been achieved through His efforts, he, for all his greatness, quarrelled with Him. Alas that even the gods should succumb to anger ! Fie on great possessions ! (38-41).

Then, in the same *muhūrta*, the Lord in the plenitude of His power and opulence, married with all circumstance of pomp those women, each separately in her own home, assuming as many forms. Living

¹ S. quoting Parāśara says the number was actually 16100; and comprised Siddha and Asura maidens as well as Kshattriyas.

with them, unseparated for a moment, in those houses of theirs which had neither equal nor superior, He, whose ways are past understanding, diverted Himself, perfect as He is in the enjoyment of the bliss of the Self, with those lovely women who were the partial incarnations of Lakshmi, and discharged the duties of the householder like any ordinary man. Having won for their spouse the Lord of Ramā, whose ways even Brahmā and the other great gods do not know, they enjoyed with ever increasing delight His loving smile and look and the rapture of first embraces that followed, with its love-talk and the blushes it brought to their cheeks. They, who had hundreds of maids at their beck and call, preferred to wait on the Lord themselves, to do Him loving service. Jumping up to meet Him when He came, they would place a seat for Him, and welcoming Him with all honours, bathe and massage His feet, give him *pan*, fan Him, comb His tresses, adorn Him with sandal paste and flowers, and attend on Him in bed, in His bath, and while He had His dinner. (42-45).

CHAPTER LX

THE LORD TEASES RUKMINI

Sri Suka said: One day Rukmini, attended by her maids, was serving the Lord, fanning Him as He, the Lord of the universe, reclined at ease on her couch. Be it remembered that it was the Supreme Lord Who knows no birth, Who creates, sustains and destroys the universe in play, That was incarnate among the Yadus for the safeguarding of the norms of Dharma that He Himself had established. In that chamber, brilliant with its canopy hung with shining ropes of pearl and lamps of crystal, with its jasmine garlands and flowers, with the bright moonlight streaming in through the lattice windows, the breeze from the garden wafting the fragrance of *pārijāta* trees, and the smoke of incense drifting out through the casements, she waited, O King, upon her Lord, the Master of the worlds, as He reclined happily on her couch on the bright bed of swan-down, soft as the froth on milk.

Taking from the maid the chowrie with the diamond handle, the august lady stood by the side of the Lord, fanning Him. With rings and bracelets on the hand that held the chowrie, and her jewelled anklets tinkling, she shone with the splendour of her garland of pearls crimsoned by the saffron on her breasts, which were covered by the hem of her garment, and the priceless girdle on her waist. Looking with pleasure at her, Śrī incarnate, who knows no haven but Him, who always assumes a form appropriate to that which He takes in play, and on whose face, bright with the sheen of curls and eardrops and of the neck with its gold medallion, played a nectar-sweet smile, Hari spoke—and, ah!¹, there was a smile on His face (1-9).

The Lord said: 'Princess, you were sought by kings as powerful as the Guardians of the worlds, mighty in their valour, opulent, and excelling in beauty of form, liberality and strength. In spite of your father and brother having promised them your hand, why did you reject, O lovely lady, Chaidya and others, when they, mad with love, came to claim you as suitors, and choose us instead, who were in no way your equals; who had sought sanctuary in the ocean from fear of the kings; who had incurred the enmity of the strong, and had practically relinquished all claims to a throne? Most women who throw in their lot with men whose attitude towards things ordained is ambiguous, who are not subdued to the ways of the world, fall into affliction. We were paupers ever, and it is the paupers that love us; that is why few rich men pay me court, O graceful dame. Marriage and friendship are best contracted between those who are well matched in affluence, rank, power, beauty and the prospects the future holds out for them, and not between unequals. You, O daughter of Vidarbha's king, without considering these matters, hastily chose us, who are devoid of virtues and are falsely extolled by mendicants. Even now you may betake yourself to some eminent Kshattriya who is worthy of you, and with whom you may attain all you wish for

¹ There was a hint of mischief in that smile, as is suggested by the 'ā' taken as a separate word, which is an exclamation of the narrator, who feels unhappy (*Toshinī*.)

in this and the other world. Chaidya, Sālva, Jarāsandha, Dantavaktra and other monarchs are my enemies, and so is Rukmī, your elder brother, O you of the beautiful thighs. To humble the pride of those arrogant men, intoxicated by their strength, I who inflict disgrace on the wicked carried you off, good lady. Being wholly indifferent to the body, to house and home, we are not enamoured of wife or child or possessions. We are sufficient unto ourselves in the possession of our own soul, and quiet and unconcerned like a light¹ shining by itself' (10-20).

Srī Suka said: Having said that, to chasten her self-complacency, because she had fancied, from His being never away from her side, that she had His love more than any one else, the Lord fell silent. Hearing those unkind words, the like of which her Beloved, the Master of the Rulers of the three worlds, had never before used to her, a great fear came upon the royal lady; she trembled in her heart, and was plunged in bottomless care, as she wept. She stood there, hanging down her head, absently tracing patterns on the floor with the lovely, delicate foot that glowed with the ruddy hue of her toe-nails, and wetting her saffron-covered breasts with tears that were black with *kohl*, her voice choked by a boundless grief. The chowrie fell from her nerveless hand, and the bracelets on it slipped down, her mind a blank from the shock of grief and fear and sadness. In her extreme agitation, she slumped down all of a sudden in a dead faint, with dishevelled hair, like a plantain brought down by the wind (21-24).

Seeing how strong was the bond of love that held His beloved, who could not understand His extravagant humour, Krishna, the Compassionate Lord, was moved to pity. Quickly getting off the couch, He with His four arms raised her up and gathered her hair in a knot and stroked her softly with the lotus hand. Wiping off the tears from her eyes and from the breasts on which they were falling fast, and embracing the faithful wife who was wholly devoted to Him, the Lord, the Refuge of the good, Who knew all the arts of conciliation, tenderly

¹ That is, being the self-luminous Witness, uninvolved in *samsāra*.

soothed her, who suffered undeservedly, O King, bewildered by His wild jesting. The Lord pleaded with her, saying, 'You must not be cross with me, O daughter of Vidarbha's King. I know that you are mine, heart and soul. I did it in jest, my fair one, I wished to hear what you would say and to see your lovely face with the frown on it, the lips quivering with the anger of outraged love, the far corners of the eyes reddening as they flash their oblique glances. Ah ! my gentle dear, whom I have hurt, this is the supreme joy that the family life holds for a man, that he can while away the hours pleasantly, jesting with his beloved' (25-31).

Srī Suka said : Thus comforted by the Lord, O King, the daughter of Vidarbha realized that He had been speaking in jest, and felt reassured that her Beloved would not desert Her. With a coy and loving glance accompanied by a bashful smile, at the august face of the Lord, she addressed Him, the prince of men, in these words, O scion of the Bharatas. Rukumiṇī said : 'It is even as you said, O Lord of the lotus-eyes—I am not the equal of Thee, exalted Lord, That art supremely great. What comparison can there be between the Lord, Who is paramount over the Three and reposes in His Glory, and me, a common soul, with a nature fashioned by the three *guṇas*, whose favour is courted only by the ignorant ! It is true enough, O Thou of the immense strides, that Thou, the Ātman That is pure Consciousness, liest still in the deep of the heart, as though in fear of the *guṇas*. Those whose senses hanker after objects of enjoyment are always at war with Thee ; but Thy very servitors abjure the sovereign's throne, which impenetrable ignorance occupies. The behaviour of even the sages who savour the honey of Thy lotus feet is ambiguous and wholly beyond the comprehension of the animals who pass for men ; and when Thy devotees themselves go their own way, which is not the way of the world, should one be surprised that Thou, the Supreme Lord, infinitely great, dost so ?' (32-36).

'But Thou art no pauper, O Lord, for Thou dost somewhat ; to Thee even those like Aja and others, who receive the homage of the worlds, pay tribute. Those whom prosperity has blinded do not know Thee, the

Destroyer, and are content to pamper the body ; but Thou art supremely dear to the great Powers, who receive the world's worship, even as they are to Thee. Thou art the sum of all human goals, the Ātman Whose attainment is the fruit of all endeavour, and to gain Which wise men give up all else. It is they that are company worthy of Thee, O Lord, not the men and women who are drawn to each other by passion, only to know the pleasure and the pain that it brings. Knowing that the sages, who have abjured all violence, proclaim Thy greatness, knowing, too, that Thou art the Soul of the universe, Who givest Thyself to those that seek Thee, I chose Thee, rejecting the Lotus-born and the Lords of the celestial realms—not to speak of others—whose fondest hopes are blasted by time that obeys the flicker of Thy eyebrow. It is absurd of Thee to say, O elder brother of Gada, that Thou—Who tookest me, Thy inalienable right, putting the kings to flight with the mere twanging of Thy bow Sārṅga, as the lion does his prey, scattering the lesser beasts—that Thou soughtest shelter in the ocean from those same kings. Are the illustrious kings Anga, the son of Vena (Pr̥thu), the son of Jayanti (Bharata), the son of Nahusha (Yayāti), Gaya and others who, giving up an empire, entered the penitential woods in their eagerness to attain Thee, still to be found here forlornly seeking Thee and suffering, O lotus-eyed ? (37-41).

What mortal woman, who knows her own true interest, having once inhaled the fragrance of Thy lotus feet, O Thou That art the Home of all the virtues—that fragrance which brings release to mankind, which Lakshmi longs for, and the good glorify—will disregard it and choose another who is ever haunted by the great fear ? I chose, as saviour in my need, Thee, the Overlord of all the worlds, the Soul, and the fulfiller of all that one can desire here or hereafter. May I, whirled through the endless maze of births,¹ reach the sanctuary, Thy foot ; for Thou destroyest *samsāra* and makest one with Thyself him who yearns for Thee. Let that woman whose ears have not heard Thy glory sung in

¹ (v. ४). 'Bewildered by the exaltation of the gospel of works in the Vedas' (S.),

the halls of Mr̥da and Virinchī, wed the kind of king Thou spokest of, who gets in a home where the woman rules, the treatment meted out to asses, oxen, dogs, cats or errand boys ! The woman who, having never tasted the honey of Thy lotus feet, is stupid enough to look upon any man as the darling of her heart, clings to one who is but a living corpse—flesh, bone, blood, worm, excreta, chyle, bile and wind, wrapped in a covering of skin, and nail, and hair on the face, the head and the body. O Lotus-eyed, may I remain firm in my attachment to Thy feet, though Thou, being in love with the Self, hast no immoderate affection for me. When, in order to manifest the universe, Thou lookest upon me,¹ putting forth an abundance of energy—ah ! how infinite is the Grace that Thou showerest thus upon me ! (42-46).

‘But what you said, O Madhusūdana, was not without truth, I must admit; for even an un-married girl may lose her heart to some one, as happened in the case of Ambā. The harlot, even if she is married, is ever hankering after new lovers. No sensible man should burden himself with an unchaste woman ; if he does, he forfeits both worlds ’ (47-48).

The exalted Lord answered, ‘Gentle princess, it was just to hear this that I tricked you. All that you have said, putting your own gloss on my words, is true. Loving Me with your whole heart as you do, my dear, all blessings that you have desired of Me are always yours, putting an end to all desire, O ever-auspicious one. I have seen the intensity of your love and your absolute fidelity to your husband, O blameless one, for I could not divert your heart from its allegiance to Me, much as I tried to shake you with My words. Those women who, ruled by desire, seek Me, the Lord of Liberation, through the practice of austerities and the observance of vows, only for the satisfaction of concupiscence, are taken in by My beguiling Power of Māyā. They are indeed unfortunate, O strong-minded one, who having propitiated Me, beg of Me, Who can grant release as well as the satisfaction of all desires, only enjoyments,

¹ When the time is ripe for creation, the Supreme Purusha sets Prakṛti active by a purposeful look.

which can be had even in the lowest of births, (not union with Me, from Whom those enjoyments come); and dominated by the senses as they are, they are quite happy in that brutish life. Fortunately, O queen of My home, you have given me the unfailing devotion that brings release from bondage, and is impossible for the wicked, especially so for the woman who harbours evil thoughts, gives free rein to the lusting senses, and is full of guile. I know, my proud love, of no woman anywhere who loves her husband as you do. Scorning the kings who had come as suitors, you sent Me the Brahmana with a secret message, merely on the strength of reports that had spoken well of Me. The disfiguring of your brother, defeated in battle, and again, the killing of him while playing dice during the wedding¹ festivities, and the grief that they brought you, you bore patiently, and never said a word, for fear of estranging us,² and by that you won our hearts. You despatched a messenger with a clear and exact message for my private ear, to get me to come; and when I delayed, the world seemed to you empty, and you wanted to discard your body; you felt that no one else was worthy of you. For that I can never repay you; I can only rejoice in your joy' (49-57).

Srī Suka said: Thus the exalted Lord of the universe, Who finds all delight in the Self, diverted Himself with Ramā, indulging in loving talk and badinage, after the way of the world. Likewise, in His other homes too, the Ominpresent Lord Hari, Mentor of the worlds, busied Himself with the duties of the domestic life, like any other householder (58-59).

CHAPTER LXI

BALA SLAYS RUKMI

Srī Suka said: Every one of His spouses bore Krishna ten sons, who were in no way inferior to their father in the richness of their natural endowments. Every princess, seeing that Achyuta never left her home,

¹ The marriage of Aniruddha to his grand-daughter, related in the next chapter. ² 'Us': i.e. Balarama, who under provocation killed Rukmi, as well as Krishna and their relations.

thought that she was dearer to Him than all the others, because they did now know Him as He truly was. While these women were captivated by the lovely lotus face, the long arms, the long eyes with their loving and laughing glances, and the charming talk of the exalted Lord, they found their witchery powerless against the will of Him Who knows no lack. His sixteen thousand spouses could not take His senses by assault with the darts of the god of love, powered by the suggestive play of eyebrows, which charmed the heart by the mute invitation of sly smile and sidelong look, or by other amorous arts. Having got for their spouse the Lord of Ramā, Whose glory was beyond the ken of even Brahmā and his peers, they found ever-increasing delight in His playful loving glances and in the unabated ardour as of first love¹. They, with hundreds of maid-servants to do their bidding, personally waited on the Lord to do Him loving service, going forth to receive Him when He came, placing a seat for Him and welcoming Him with all honours, giving Him *pan*, removing His fatigue, fanning Him, adorning Him with scents and flowers, combing His hair, giving Him His bath and paying Him other attentions (1-6).

Of those spouses of Krishna who bore him ten sons each, eight, who have been already named, were his principal queens. I will now give you the names of their sons, Pradyumna and the rest. Of the sons who were born to Hari of Rukmiṇī, Pradyumna was the eldest, the others being Chārudeshṇa, Sudeshṇa, Chārudeha, the strong Suchāru, Chārugupta, Bhadrachāru, his junior Chāruchandra, Vichāru, and Chāru, who was the tenth; these were in no wise inferior to their father. Satyabhāmā's ten sons were Bhānu, Subhānu, Svarbhānu, Prabhānu, Bhānumān, Chandrabhānu, Brhadbhānu, Atibhānu, who was the eighth among them, Sribhānu and Pratibhānu. Sumitra, Purujit, Satyajit, Sahasrajit, Vijaya, Chitraketu, Vasumān, Dravida and Kratu were the sons of Jāmbavati; who, with Sāmba, the eldest, were highly thought of by their father. Sāmba. Veera, Chandra, Aśvasēna, Chitragu,

¹ The 'unabated eagerness', in its context in the original, may refer either to the ladies or to the Lord Himself.

Vegavān, Vrisha, Āma, Sanku, Vasu and the gracious¹ Kunti were the sons of Nāgnajitī. Sruta, Kavi, Vrisha, Veera, Subāhu, Bhadra, Ekala, Śānti, Darśa, Poornamāsa, and Somaka, the youngest, were Kālindī's sons. The sons of the Princess² of Madra (Lakshmaṇā) were Pragho-sha, Gātravan, Simha, Bala, Prabala, Ūrdhvaga, Mahā-śakti, Saha, Oja, and Aparājita. The sons of Mitra-vindā were Vṛka, Harsha, Anila, Grdhra, Vardhana, Annāda, Mahāśa, Pāvana, Vahni and Kṣhudi. The sons of Bhadrā (Saibya) were Sangrāmajit, Brhatsena, Soora, Praharāṇa, Arijit, Jaya, Subhadra, Vāma, Āyu and Sat-yaka. Dīptiman, Tāmratapta and others were the sons born to Hari of Rōhiṇī. Aniruddha of the immense strength was born to Pradyumna of Rukmavatī, the daughter of Rukmī, at Bhojkata. The sons and grand-sons of all these were reckoned in crores, O King, the mothers of the sons of Krishna being sixteen thousand and more (7-19).

The King asked : 'How did Rukmī who, having been defeated by Krishna in battle, was waiting for an opportunity to slay Him, come to give his daughter to his enemy's son? Tell me, O wise one, how these, who hated each other, came to entertain the idea of a marital alliance at all. The yogis see clearly what is past and what is yet to be, what exists, but is beyond the reach of the senses, what is far and what is hidden' (20-21).

Srī Suka said : Chosen by her in a bride's-choice, the god of love, now possessed of a material body, carried her off, after inflicting a defeat on the assembled kings, himself fighting as a lone charioteer. Though Rukmī could not forget his quarrel with Krishna, he gave his daughter to his nephew to please his sister. You will remember that Kṛtavarmā's son Balī had married

¹ 'Gracious' may equally apply to Vasu.

² In regard to her, S. merely says that her sons alone are mentioned by way of illustrating the profusion of the Lord's progeny born of his numerous other spouses. He does not more closely identify her. Other commentators are not in agreement on the point. While one thinks that it is a reference to the wife of Balarama, also an incarnation of Hari, and the children He had by her, some others think she was the chief of the 16,000 spouses Krishna married after slaying Bhauma, while yet others identify her with Bhadrā.

Rukmiṇī's daughter, the maid Chārumatī of the wide eyes. Rukmī gave his son's daughter Rochanā to Aniruddha, his daughter's son and Hari's son's son, again to please his sister. Though he was Hari's sworn enemy and he knew that such an alliance was against Dharma, he could not free himself from the bonds of affection (20-25).

On that festive occasion, Rukmiṇī, Rama, Keśava, Sāmba, Pradyumna and others went to the city of Bhojakata. After the wedding, the rulers of Kalinga and others, arrogant men, said to Rukmī, 'Defeat Bala at dice. He is unskilled in the game, O King, though he is greatly addicted to it.' Thus instigated, Rukmī challenged Bala to a game of dice and played with Him. Rama staked successively a hundred, a thousand, and ten thousand gold pieces. Rukmī won, and the King of Kalinga indulged in a loud laugh at Bala, all his teeth showing; the Wielder of the Plough could not bear that. Then Rukmī staked a hundred thousand, and Bala won the game. Rukmī, cheating, claimed, 'I have won'. His mind in a turmoil of rage like the ocean at the full moon, the illustrious Lord, whose eyes, naturally red, became redder, staked ten crores in His fury. Rama won that game too, playing straight. But Rukmī dishonestly contended, 'I have won. Let these umpires judge'. Then was heard a voice from the sky declaring, 'Bala has without a doubt won the stake, scrupulously abiding by His bid; it is Rukmī that lies'. The son of the King of Vidarbha, egged on by the evil-minded Kshattriyas, disregarded the voice and ridiculed Sankarshaṇa, prompted to his doom by destiny. He said, 'You cowherds, jungle-folk, know not a thing about the game of dice. It is kings that play for stakes with dice and arrows, not the likes of you.' Insulted thus by Rukmī and mocked by the kings, He lifted up his club in a rage and killed him at that auspicious gathering. Then swiftly pursuing the King of Kalinga and catching hold of him at the tenth step, he knocked out the teeth that he had bared, laughing at him. Other Kings, their arms, thighs and heads broken, and their bodies covered with blood, fled in a panic, feeling the weight of Bala's club (26-38).

When his brother-in-law Rukmī was slain, Hari said no word by way of approval or disapproval, fearing to lose the affection of Rukmiṇī on the one hand, and of Bala on the other. Putting the bridegroom Aniruddha with his bride in a splendid chariot, the Dāsārhas, Rama and others, who having the support of Madhusūdana, had successfully accomplished all their objects, returned to Kuśasthali (Dvārakā) from Bhōjakata (39-40).

CHAPTER LXII

ANIRUDDHA AND USHĀ

Srī Suka said : Bāṇa¹ was the eldest of the hundred sons of the high-souled Bali. He of the thousand hands pleased Mr̥da, Who was dancing the Tāṇḍava dance, (by playing on instruments). The exalted Lord, paramount over all creatures, Lover and Refuge of His devotees, granted him a boon. And he solicited His service as the Governor of his city. One day he, who had waxed in pride by reason of his power, addressed Girīśa, Who was by his side, touching His lotus feet with his sun-bright crown as he said, 'I offer my prostrations to Thee, Great God, That art the Mentor and Overlord of the universe, the wishing tree that fulfils all desires of men who have wants. The thousand arms that Thou hast given me are a mere burden to me. In the three worlds I can find no worthy foeman except Thee. With my hands intolerably itching for a fight, O Primordial Lord, I sought out the elephants of the four quarters to fight with them, pulverizing the mountains on the way ; but they too fled me in a panic'. On hearing that, the exalted Lord was incensed, and He told him, 'When your flagstaff breaks in two, you fool, there will be a fight with one who is My equal, and that will humble your pride'. Thus told, the silly fellow went home rejoicing, O King ; he actually looked forward to the destruction of his strength that Girīśa had foretold ! (I-II).

He had an unmarried daughter Ushā, who enjoyed in a dream the embraces of the son of Pradyumna, a lover

¹ One verse at the beginning of this chapter and two and a half verses between the first and second half of verse 1 (as translated), are missing in some mss., and S. has not commented on them.

whom she had never met in the flesh or heard of. Not seeing him, she woke up, agitated and shamefaced, in the midst of her companions, crying, 'Where are you, my love?' Bāṇa had a Minister, Kumbhāṇḍa, whose daughter, Chitrālekḥā, was Ushā's companion; her curiosity being roused, she questioned her: 'Whom do you seek, lovely lady? What exactly do you want? You have no husband yet that I am aware of, Princess' (12-15).

Ushā replied: 'I saw in a dream a man of a dark-blue complexion, with eyes like the lotus, who was clad in yellow silks, and had mighty arms, a man to delight a woman's heart. I seek him, my beloved, who having made me drunk with the nectar of his lips has gone, I know not where, plunging me, who long for him, in an ocean of misery.' (16-17).

Chitrālekḥā said: 'I will banish your sorrows. If you can point him out anywhere in the three worlds, I shall fetch him. Therefore, tell me who is the man who has stolen your heart.' Saying this, she drew life-like sketches of the gods, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Chāraṇas, Pannagas, Asuras, Vidyādharas, Yakshas, and humans. Among the men she drew were the likenesses of the Vṛṣṇis, Soora, Ānakadundubhi, Rama, Krishna and Pradyumna. On seeing the last, she blushed. When she saw Aniruddha drawn, O King, Ushā looked down shyly, exclaiming with a smile, 'It is he, it is he!' (18-21).

Chitrālekḥā, being an adept in yoga, knew that he was the grandson of Krishna; and she went by air, O King, to Dvārakā, which was under the protection of Krishna. Employing her *yogic* power, she took him, who was asleep on a fine couch, to Sonitapura, where she showed her lover to her friend. On seeing him, most beautiful of men, she was overjoyed, and she spent her days in dalliance with the son of Pradyumna in her house, where no male eyes could penetrate. Honoured with priceless clothes, wreaths, perfumes, incense, lights, seats and so on, with food and drink and rare delicacies, and waited upon with pleasing words and loving attentions, he lived concealed in the maidens' quarters, his heart ravished by Ushā, whose love grew every moment, and lost count of the days (22-26).

The guards on duty knew, from signs that could not be hidden, that she, whom the Yadu hero was making love to, and who was deliriously happy, had broken her maiden vows. And they informed the King, 'We find, O King, that your daughter has been guilty of conduct unbecoming of a maid, which will disgrace the family. We cannot see how any one could have violated the modesty of the maiden, over whom we kept vigilant watch and whom no man could set eyes upon¹.' Shocked to hear of his daughter's lapse, Bāna went in hot haste to the maidens' quarters, and there he beheld the rising hope of the Yadus. He was filled with wonder as he looked at the son of Kāma, who was a paragon of men in his beauty—dark-blue in complexion, clad in raiment of a tawny hue, with eyes like the lotus, and his face charming with the sheen of his ringlets, the lustre of his ear-pendants and his laughing glances. He was playing dice with his glorious lady-love, who was seated before him, and on his breast hung the garland of spring jasmine smeared with the saffron on her breasts in the act of embrace. The scion of the Madhus, on seeing him enter with his retainers and forces ready armed for attack, took his stand with upraised iron club to kill, like death armed with his rod. When they surrounded him, intending to seize him, he felled them, as the powerful boar slaughters dogs. Attacked thus, they fled from the house with broken heads, thighs and arms. Enraged at the destruction of his forces, the strong son of Bali bound him with the serpent-bonds. Hearing of his being put in bonds, Ushā was beside herself with grief and despair, and she wailed, her eyes brimming with tears (27-35).

CHAPTER LXIII

KRISHNA'S FIGHT WITH BĀNA

Sri Suka said: Four months of the rainy season passed, his relations mourning Aniruddha, who was nowhere to be seen, O scion of the Bharatas. When they

¹ (v. r.) 'We cannot say how the violation of the chastity of the maiden could have happened; for though we kept vigilant guard over her, she has a wicked companion.'

heard through Nārada of his being in duress and of the way he had acquitted himself, the Vṛshnis, who looked upon Krishna as their god, went in all haste to Sonitapura. Led by Rama and Krishna, Pradyumna, Yuyudhāna, Gada, Sāmba, Sāraṇa and other Sātvata Chiefs, as well as Nanda, Upananda, Bhadra and others, converged from all sides on Bāṇa's city, and laid siege to it with an army of twelve *akshauhīnīs*. Seeing the city gardens laid waste from all directions, and the ramparts with their raised keeps and gateways battered down, Bāṇa was in a rage, and he sallied forth with an army of equal strength. The exalted Lord Rudra, mounted on His bull Nandi, and followed by His *gaṇas* and His son, fought Rama and Krishna, taking Bāṇa's side. Terrific and tumultuous were the combats that ensued—making the hair of the spectator stand on end—between Krishna and Sankara, between Pradyumna and Guha, between Kumbhānda and Kūpakarṇa on the one hand and Bala on the other, between Sāmba and Bāṇa's son, between Bāṇa and Sātyaki. To see the fight came Brahmā and the great gods, the sages, the adepts and the Chāraṇas, the Gandharvas, Apsarases and Yakshas, in their aerial cars. With the sharp arrows shot from His bow Sārṅga, Sauri put to rout Sankara's followers, the elementals, the Pramathas, the retainers of Kubera, the carrion-eating imps, the demons and vampires, the spirits that cause obstacles, the spirits of the dead, the mother-goddesses, the ghosts and ogres, the Kūshmāndas and the Brahma-rākshasas. The Wielder of the Pināka aimed many and various celestial weapons at the Wielder of the Sārṅga. Unruffled, Sarṅgapāṇi foiled them with other correspondingly powerful weapons without making a vaunt of it; despatching the weapon presided over by Brahmā against the same weapon, the weapon of the mountain against the weapon of the wind, the weapon of the cloud against the weapon of fire, the weapon of Narayana against the weapon of Paśupati. Leaving Girīśa dazed and gaping by using against Him the weapon that induces yawning, Sauri harried Bāṇa's army with sword, mace and arrow. Skanda, assailed from all sides by the flood of Pradyumna's arrows, rode away from the battlefield on his peacock-mount, blood pour-

ing from his wounds. Kumbhānda and Kūparkarṇa fell under the blows of the spiked iron bar (wielded by Bala), and their army fled in all directions, having lost its commanders (1-16).

Seeing his army scatter, Bāna in a great rage advanced swiftly by chariot to attack Krishna, leaving Sātyaki alone. Lusting for battle, he drew simultaneously five hundred bows, fitting two arrows in each. The Lord Hari cut at one stroke all the bows, and striking down the driver, the chariot and the horses, blew a long and loud note on His conch-shell. Bāna's mother, Kotarā, in her anxiety to save her son's life, came and stood before Krishna naked, with dishevelled hair. Gada's elder brother turned His face away so as not to see her naked. In that brief moment, Bāna, who had lost his chariot and had had his bows broken, entered his city. When the company of the spirits had been put to rout, the Spirit of Fever, three-headed and three-footed, rushed upon the Dāsārha, setting the ten directions ablaze as it were. On seeing it, the God Narayana set His Fever¹ on it. And there was a great fight between the two fevers owing allegiance respectively to Narayana and to Mahesvara. The Fever of Maheswara wailed aloud as it fought, sore oppressed by the Fever of Vishnu; and seeing no other asylum, the terrified Fever of Maheswara sought Hrshikeśa's protection, and praised Him, his palms joined in salutation (17-24).

The fever said: 'Salutations to Thee That art verily that Brahma of the limitless puissance, Which is supreme over all Powers, animating them as pure Intelligence, and Which is the Cause of the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe; Which the Vedas reveal but indirectly, as It is absolute Serenity, free from all change². Time, Karma, destiny, natural disposition,

¹ Which S. describes as the ague, apparently in contrast to Maheswara's fever with its high temperature.

² The fever says, by implication, that it and its like can prevail only against what has specific qualities, whereas the Brahma, being beyond all peculiarities, can be dominated by none else, but Itself dominates all, because it is Pure Consciousness. From the body comes *karma*, the seed, which in its turn produces the body, the sprout; and this goes on in an endless cycle, which is terminated only when the Brahma is realized.

the *jīva*, the subtle elements, the body, the life-breath, the ego, the sixteen evolutes, and their complex (the subtle body)—such is the endless cycle, as of seed and sprout, which is the work of Thy Power of Māyā, and which is negated only when Thou art realized; and so in Thee I take refuge. Taking many a birth in the spirit of play, Thou protectest the gods, good men and the norms of Dharma that maintain the world order, destroying the transgressor who practises violence. Likewise Thy present incarnation too is for the purpose of ridding the earth of its burden. This unbearably severe ague of Thy creation torments me. All creatures deserve to suffer thus only so long as they, being slaves of desire, do not devote themselves to Thy feet.' The Lord said: 'I am pleased with you, three-headed one, you shall have no cause to fear the fever of my creation. And you must give him, who calls to mind this dialogue of ours, no cause to dread you.' Thus told, the fever sent by Maheswara made its bow to Achyuta and departed (25-30).

Meanwhile, Bāṇa, riding in his chariot, issued forth to do battle with Janārdana. Wielding every variety of weapon with his thousand hands, the Asura in a frenzy of fury let fly his arrows at the Wielder of the discus, O King. While he discharged magical weapons without intermission, the Lord lopped off his arms with the sharp-edged discus, as if they were the branches of a huge tree. When his arms were being cut down, the Lord Bhava approached the Wielder of the Discus and spoke to Him, spurred by compassion for His devotee. Sri Rudra said: 'Thou art verily the Brahma, the Mystery hidden in the heart of the Veda, the Light of lights, but the pure of mind see Thee (by Thy light) as That Which is absolute and pure like *ākāśa*. Thou art the Cosmic Purusha That hast the worlds for Thy limbs; the sky is Thy navel, the fire is Thy mouth, water Thy virility, the heavens Thy head, the quarters Thy ears, the earth Thy feet, the moon Thy mind, the sun Thy eye, myself Thy ego, the ocean Thy belly, Indra Thine arm, vegetation the hair on Thy body, the clouds Thy locks, Brahmā Thy intellect, Prajāpati Thy genitals, Dharma Thy heart. Thy present incarnation,

O Thou Whose power knows no wane, is for the safeguarding of Dharma and the welfare of the worlds ; and we, invested with authority by Thee, look after the seven worlds. Thou art absolutely unique, the first Cause, Primordial Spirit, Self-luminous Intelligence. Thou art, too, incomparable, being the One without a second, the uncaused Cause of all, the Supreme Controller, though by Thy Power of Māyā Thou showest Thyself as different in different bodies in order to illuminate the objects of the senses. Just as the sun, though hidden by his own shadow, reveals that shadow, as well as the objects on which it falls, Thou That art Perfection itself, self-luminous, though hidden from the *jīvas* by the ego, dost light up the *jīvas* as well as their limiting adjuncts constituted by the three *guṇas*. Men who succumb to Thy Māyā are so much infatuated with son, wife, house and home, that they fall into a sea of sorrow, now¹ raising their heads, now going under. He who, having received at the hands of the Lord a human body, fails to subdue his passions and revere Thy feet, is to be pitied, for he is a self-deceiver. The mortal who repudiates Thee, the Supreme Lord, the Ātman That is ever dear, for the sake of the objects of the senses, which are its very antitheses in all these respects, rejects nectar to swallow poison. Myself, Brahmā, the gods, and the sages whose hearts are pure, put our trust wholly in Thee, the Supreme Lord, the Ātman That is most dear. To gain release from the cycle of birth and death, we worship Thee, the Supreme Lord, the Cause of the preservation, creation and destruction of the universe, Who looks on all with an equal eye and is ever at peace, Who is the true Friend of, and the Soul in all creatures, Who is the One without a second, incomparable and unique, in Whom are all the worlds and all souls. This Bāṇa here is dear to me, he is my favoured devotee. I have assured him protection, O Lord ; therefore vouchsafe him Thy grace, even as Thou didst to the Lord of the Asuras' (31-45).

The Lord answered : 'We shall do Thy pleasure, O Lord, even as Thou wishest. I cordially approve of

¹ The *jīva* goes, according to his *karma*, now into a higher birth, say, a god, now into a lower, a tree for example.

what Thou proposest. Besides, I must not kill this Asura, as he is Virochana's son's son. I promised Prahlāda, granting him a boon, that no descendant of his shall ever be slain by Me. It was to humble his pride that I cut down his arms and destroyed his great army, which burdened the earth. I have left him four of his arms intact ; they will be immune from decay and death. Being the Chief of Thy attendants, the Asura will have nothing to fear from anybody' (46-49).

Being thus assured that he need have no fears, the Asura made his prostrations to Krishna. He put Pradyumna's son and his bride in a chariot and giving them sumptuous presents, brought them to Krishna. Krishna departed with the cordial good wishes of Rudra, taking with Him Aniruddha, richly clad and well-adorned, who was accompanied by his bride and followed by an army, one *akshauhīnī* strong. He entered His capital city, which was decked with flags and festoons, and had its roads and squares well watered. He was welcomed by the citizens, His friends, and the Brahmanas, who came out to receive Him, with the blowing of conch-shells and the playing of kettle-drums. The man who, on getting up of a morning, meditates on Krishna's triumph, and His combat with Sankara, will know no reverse (50-53).

CHAPTER LXIV

THE STORY OF NṚGA

Srī Suka said: One day, the young men of the House of Yadu, Pradyumna, Sāmba, Chāru, Bānu, Gada and others, went to a garden on the outskirts of the city for recreation. Having played a long time, they felt thirsty. Looking for water, they found to their amazement an extraordinary creature in an empty well, a giant lizard as big as a hill. Moved by compassion, they tried to get him out. But being unable to haul up the fallen creature with thongs and ropes passed over him, they came and told Krishna in great excitement. The Lord of the lotus eyes, the Protector of the universe, went there and saw him, and He lightly lifted him up with His left hand. The moment he felt the touch of

the hand of the illustrious Lord, he shed his lizard's body and stood transformed into a celestial, with a beautiful complexion like molten gold, and adorned with marvellous ornaments, raiment and wreaths (1-6).

Mukunda, though He knew, asked him who he was, because He wished to make the cause of his troubles known to those present. 'Who are you, fortunate one, endowed with such superb beauty? I am sure you must be a great god. By what act were you brought to this state, so unworthy of you, auspicious one? Tell us, if you think it proper, who you are; we should very much like to know' (7-8).

Srī Suka said: Questioned by Krishna, the Infinite Lord, the King, bowing his head with its sun-bright crown, at the feet of Mādhava, thus answered Him. Nṛga said: 'I am Nṛga, son of Ikshvāku, O Lord; Thou mayest have heard my name mentioned when great givers were spoken of. There is surely nothing that is unknown to Thee, O Lord That illuminest the intellect of all creatures, That seest all happenings with a clarity which the passage of time cannot blur. Still I shall tell Thee, as Thou commandest. I gave away as many cows as there are grains of sand on earth, or stars in the heavens, or drops of water in the showers of rain. The cows that I gifted, all come by honestly, were dun-cloured milch cows in their prime, with their calves; great milkers, gentle, pleasing to the eye, and possessed of all good points; their horns were cased in gold and their hooves shod in silver, and they had rich scarves round their necks. It was to most worthy Brahmanas that I gave them—virtuous young men of exemplary conduct, who had to support families in want, men who were becomingly attired, who lived a life of unostentatious piety and were widely known for their austerities, and exceedingly liberal in imparting knowledge of the Veda. With the cows I gave them land, gold, houses, horses, elephants, young brides with serving maids, gingelly, silver, bedding, apparel, gems, furniture and chariots. I offered sacrifices too, and performed works of public utility (9-15).

'A cow belonging to a worthy Brahmana had strayed into my herd; in ignorance, I gifted her to another

Brahmana. Seeing him leading her away, her owner said to him, "She is mine". He to whom I had given her retorted, "But she is mine, Nṛga gave her to me". Thus disputing among themselves, the Brahmanas came to me. Speaking up each for his own interest, one said, "You gave her to me", the other, "You walked off with my property". Hearing what they said, I was sadly perplexed. Being placed in a dilemma on a question of Dharma, I entreated both the Brahmanas, saying, "I shall give you a hundred thousand of the best cows available; kindly give me this. Do me this favour, honoured sirs, I am your servant. I did it unwittingly. Save me in this strait; else I must fall into the most heinous of hells". "I will not take your offer, O King", said the owner and walked off. And the other too went away, declaring, "I will not take anything else, even if you should offer me an unlimited number of cows". (16-21).

'Just then the messengers of death came and took me to Yama's abode; and there Yama asked me, O Lord of the gods, O Master of the worlds, "Will you expiate your sins first, O King, or receive the reward of your merits? I see no end of shining worlds that your merits as a giver have won for you". "I will first expiate my sins, O Lord". "Fall then", he answered; and as I fell, I saw myself transformed into a giant lizard. Yearning for a sight of Thy blessed face, I have not lost remembrance of the past, because I have been devoted to the Brahmanas and a liberal giver and Thy humble devotee, O Keśava. O Omnipresent Lord That art beyond the reach of the senses, how is it That Thou, the Paramātmā, Whom even the master-yogis can only meditate upon in their pure hearts in the light of Vedic revelation, and That showest Thyself only to him who is fit for liberation from the bondage of birth, camest to be perceived with the eye of the flesh by one whose intelligence has been eclipsed by many sorrows? O God of gods, O Lord of the universe, Govinda, Supreme Puruṣa, Narayana, Hrishikeśa, Illustrious Lord, O Achyuta That knowest no wane, O Krishna, permit me to depart to the abode of the gods.

¹ This statement may (*alt.*) be attributed to Nṛga himself. (S.)

Wherever I may find myself, may my mind remain cleaving to Thy feet. Salutations to Thee That createst all that is, to the Brahma of infinite puissance, salutations to Thee that art Vāsudeva and Krishna¹, to Thee That dispensest² the fruit of good works'. Uttering this prayer, he walked round Him reverently, and touching His feet with his head, he received leave to depart, and got into a splendid aerial car as all men looked on (22-30).

And the exalted Lord Krishna, Devaki's son, Who was devoted to the Brahmanas and dedicated to righteousness, spoke thus to His followers, for the instruction of Kshattriyas. 'See how hard it is for any man, even if he should be as powerful as fire, to digest the least little trifle belonging to a Brahmana that he has unjustly appropriated; how much more so should it be for kings, who in their conceit think of themselves as the lords of creation? I do not look upon the Hālāhala as poison, since it may be neutralized; but the property of a Brahmana is rightly described as poison, because there is nothing on earth that can annul its evil effects. Poison kills him who swallows it; fire may be quenched by water; but the fire kindled by the fire-stick that is the Brahmana's property consumes the whole family right down to its roots. The property of a Brahmana taken without his leave destroys three generations³; if it is taken from him by force, it destroys ten generations before him and ten after. Kings who, blinded by the intoxication of sovereign power, covet the wealth of Brahmanas, opt for hell; in their abysmal folly they do not see they are riding for a fall. For as many years as there are particles of dust wetted by the tears that fall from the eyes of large-hearted Brahmanas with families weeping in distress, deprived of their livelihood, shall the kings and the members of their families, who snatch the Brahmana's substance with impunity, be roasted in the hell named

¹ 'Krishna' stands for Him 'Who is Perpetual Bliss' (S.)

² The text has 'yogānām pataye' (lit. master of *yogas*); the translation follows S. who equates 'yogas' here with the performance of sacrifice, works of public utility and other *karmas* commended by the Veda. ³ As to what these are, the commentators differ; S. holds that they are the authors of the crime, his son and grandson.

Kumbhīpāka. He who deprives a Brahmana of his means of living, whether he himself had bestowed it on him or others had done so, shall breed as a worm in ordure for sixty thousand years. May I never come into possession of anything belonging to a Brahmana, Kings who covet the Brahmana's property sustain defeat at others' hands, lose their kingdom and die before their time, to be reborn as serpents that cause terror to others. So you, my people, should never harm a Brahmana, even if he has offended you. Even if he beat you or curse you, you should still do him obeisance. Just as I make my salutations to Brahmanas morning and evening with my senses under control, so should you; he who does not, will be punished by me. Taking a Brahmana's property, even in ignorance, causes the despoiler to fall into hell, as Nṛga fell because of the Brahmana's cow.' Having thus proclaimed His faith to the residents of Dvārakā, the Lord Mukunda, Who sanctifies all the worlds, went home (31-44).

CHAPTER LXV

BALARĀMA VISITS GOKULAM

Srī Suka said: Once the Lord Balabhadra, longing to see his friends, got into his chariot and went to Nanda's Gokulam, O first of the Kurus. The Gopas and the Gopis, who had long yearned to see him, embraced Rama, and he prostrated himself before his foster-parents, who welcomed him with blessings. Saying, 'May you, the Lord of the world, long protect us with your brother!' they took him on their laps and hugged him and drenched him with their tears. He made his obeisances in due form to the cowherd elders, while the younger men paid him their respects, according to age, intimacy and propinquity, and he greeted them with laughter and handshakes. When, after a rest, he was seated comfortably, they gathered round him, and asked solicitously about the health and welfare of their kin (the Yādavas); and he likewise made kindly enquiries of their families. In a voice that faltered from the very abundance of affection, they who, for Krishna's sake, had renounced all pleasures, asked him, 'Is all well with

our kin, Rama? Do you, now that you have your own wives and children, ever think of us? The wicked Kamsa, Heaven be thanked, was slain and our friends were liberated, and they live secure in their fortified city, having inflicted losses on the enemies and defeated them' (1-8).

The Gopis, greatly heartened at meeting Rama once again, asked him with a laugh, 'Is Krishna, the darling of the city women, happy with them? Does he remember his relations and parents? ¹Will he come here at least once, to see his mother? 'Does he of the mighty arm call to mind, O Dāsārha, our passionate devotion to him for whose sake we gave up father and mother, brothers and sisters, husband and children, every one of our own folk, in fact, whom it is so hard to renounce? ²' 'But he abandoned us incontinently, and went away, snapping the ties of affection. How could women disbelieve such promises as he made us?' 'How can the intelligent city women put faith in the words of that fickle ingrate?' 'Perhaps they believe him because he talks enchantingly, and they are possessed by the overwhelming passion which his lovely smile and look excite.' 'Why do we go on talking about him, Gopis? Let us talk of something else. If he can pass his time without us, so do we too, after a fashion'. And the women wept as they called to mind Sauri's gay laughter, His beguiling talk, His charming look, the beauty of His gait, and His loving embrace (9-15).

The Lord Śankarshaṇa, Who was well-versed in the arts of appeasement, pacified them with heart-warming messages from Krishna. He spent there the two spring months. Attended by a bevy of women to whom He brought the joys of love, the Lord Rama spent the nights in dalliance in the woods on the Yamunā's banks, lit up by the radiance of the full moon and fanned by the breeze that brought the fragrance of the lily in bloom. The celestial drink Vāruṇī, sent by Varuṇa, flowed from the hollow of a tree and filled the wood with its perfume. Inhaling the scent of the streaming drink brought by the wind, Bala went there and drank of it along with the

¹ This half-verse, is found only in some mss. ² S. suggests that the questions were put by different women.

women. The intoxicated Bala, Wielder of the Plough, then roamed the woods with the women, who sang His praises, His eyes whirling from the effects of drink. The Supreme Lord, tipsy, crowned with a wreath, wearing a single ear-pendant and the garland Vaijayanti, His smiling lotus-face adorned with the dewdrops of perspiration, imperiously summoned the Yamunā, so that He might divert Himself with water sports. When the river, thinking Him drunk, disregarded His call and did not come, He angrily dragged her towards Him with the tip of His plough. 'Since you slight me, you wicked thing, and will not come when called, I will split and drag you, gadabout¹ that you are, into a hundred streams with the tip of my plough.' The Yamunā,² thus threatened, was in a panic. She fell at the feet of the Son of the Yadus, O King, and cried trembling, 'Rama, O Rama of the mighty arm, O Master of the worlds, I did not realize the prowess of Him who, with but a fraction of Himself, supports the universe. Pray release me, O Lord That art the soul of the universe. I did not know Thy transcendent greatness. I surrender myself at Thy feet, O Thou that lovest Thy devotees'. Thus entreated, the Lord Bala released the Yamunā, and He bathed in her waters with the women, like the lord of the elephant herd with his cows. When, having sported to His heart's content, He came out of the water, the Goddess Kānti (Lakshmi) gave Him a pair of sable garments, priceless jewels and a lovely necklace. Clothing Himself in the dark raiment, wearing the garland of gold, adorning Himself, rubbing His body with unguents, He shone like the tusker that is Mahendra's mount. To this day the Yamunā may be seen flowing along the course into which it was drawn, O King, a standing proof, as it were, of the might of Bala of the infinite power. Rama thus enjoyed Himself in Vraja, charmed by the arts of its women, and finding all those nights uniformly delightful (16-32).

¹ It might also mean, 'a lewd woman'. ² She is supposed to be different from Yamunā, daughter of the sun-god, whom Śrī Krishna married.

CHAPTER LXVI 'PRETENDER' VĀSUDEVA

Srī Suka said : When Rama was away in Nanda's Vraja, the Ruler of Karūsha sent a messenger to Krishna, O King, the fool claiming that he was Vāsudeva. Being flattered by silly folk, who told him, ' You are the Lord Vāsudeva, master of the worlds, incarnate on earth,' he imagined that he was Achyuta. And the stupid man, acting like a foolish boy set up as a mock-king by children at play, sent his messenger to Krishna of the inscrutable ways, Who was in Dvārakā. The messenger went to Dvārakā, and presenting himself before the Lord Krishna, the lotus-eyed, Who was seated in the audience hall, delivered the King's message : ' I am the one and only Vāsudeva, there is no other ; and I have descended on earth out of compassion for all creatures. You must renounce the false name you have assumed, and all that insignia of ours which you have usurped in your folly, O Sātvata, and come and surrender yourself before me ; or you must give me battle ' (1-6).

Srī Suka said : Hearing the vaunting of the half-wit Poundraka, Ugrasēna and others in the assembly laughed aloud. When they had enjoyed their joke, the Lord told the messenger, ' I shall strip¹ you of the trappings you have picked up, and by reason of which you prate thus, you fool ; your mouth hidden, you shall lie slain, with herons, vultures, and other birds of prey² crowding round you ; and there the dogs shall seek you out '. The messenger conveyed the insulting reply to his master, omitting nothing. And Krishna, getting into His chariot, drove to the outskirts of Kāśī. Hearing of His preparations, Poundraka, the great charioteer, quickly sallied forth from the city with an army of two *akshauhiṇīs*. His ally, the King of Kāśī, followed, O King, supporting his rear with three *akshauhiṇīs*. Hari beheld Poundraka, fitted up with conch-shell and discus, sword and mace, and a bow like the Sārṅga ; he bore the ' Srīvatsa ' on his breast, and was adorned with an imita-

¹ This is S.'s second *alt.* The first is, ' I shall discharge upon you and the allies who have egged you on those weapons, faking which you thus prate '. ² The text has ' vata ' ; V. reads ' baka ' (crane).

tion Kausthubha gem and a garland of wild flowers. He wore a pair of yellow silks, and his banner bore the effigy of Garuda. He had a priceless crest-jewel, and shining ear-pendants shaped like the *makara*. Seeing him thus rigged up in imitation of Himself, like a player on the stage, Hari laughed heartily (7-15).

The enemy attacked Hari with spears, maces, feruled clubs, lances, darts, javelins, swords and arrows; while Krishna, with mace and sword, discus and arrows, ravaged that army of Poundraka and the King of Kāśi, with all its four divisions, elephants, chariots, horses and foot-soldiers, as fiercely as the fire that destroys the worlds at the end of the *yuga*, consumes the different classes of living creatures. That battle-field, strewn with the dismembered fragments of chariots, horses, elephants, men, mules and camels, hacked to pieces by the discus, was as terrible as the playground of the Lord of the Spirits (Rudra, at the dissolution of the worlds), but it was a sight to rejoice the hearts of the brave. Then Sauri said to Poundraka, 'Great Poundraka, I will now despatch those weapons that you asked me through your messenger to deliver up to you. And I shall see to it that my name, which you falsely assumed, you fool, is renounced. And I will most certainly give myself up to you if I do not wish to fight with you.' Taunting him thus and destroying his chariot under him with sharp arrows, He cut off Poundraka's head with the discus, as Indra does the mountain crest with his thunderbolt. Then severing with His arrows the head of the Lord of Kāśi from his body, He dropped it inside the city of Kāśi, like a lotus blown by the wind. Having thus slain the envious Poundraka along with his friend, Hari entered Dvārakā, as the Siddhas sang His nectar-sweet praises. And Poundraka, his bondage destroyed by his constant meditation on the Lord, and his imitation of Hari in outward form, was assimilated to Him in essence and appearance, O King (16-24).

When the people saw the head with its ear-pendants, fallen at the entrance to the King's palace, they were startled and cried, 'What is this?' Then assailed by doubts, they asked, 'Whose head could this be?' When they realized that it was the head of their King,

the Lord of Kāśī, his consorts, sons and relations, and citizens wept aloud, wailing, ‘Alas, we are undone ! O Lord, our King ! O Master, Master !’ His son Sudakṣhiṇa, after performing his father’s obsequies, worshipped Maheśvara with one-pointed devotion, with the help of his chief priest, resolving within himself, brave man that he was, ‘I shall avenge my father by killing his slayer’. Propitiated by him at Avimukta, the exalted Lord Bhava granted him a boon. He told Him that his one desire was to learn how he could kill his father’s slayer. ‘Propitiate, through black magic, employed with the help of Brahmanas, the Dakṣiṇāgni, which will then be as serviceable to you as a chief priest. Supported by bands of the spirits, it will help you to achieve your purpose, if it is directed against one who is the enemy of the Brahmanas’ (25-31).

Following the advice, he took vows and resorted to black magic against Krishna. Thereupon rose from the fire-pit the god of fire himself in human form, frightful in appearance, the hair on his head and beard gleaming like burnished copper, the eyes emitting sparks, the face cruel with its bared fangs, and the brows knitted in a fierce frown. Licking his chops, he, with legs as tall as palm trees, rushed upon Dvārakā naked, brandishing his flaming trident, shaking the earth under his tread, and setting the quarters ablaze, the ghouls following him. When they saw that fire raised by sorcery advance upon them, the residents of Dvārakā were terrified, like the creatures of the wilds when the forest is ablaze. To the Lord, who was playing a game of dice in the assembly hall, they came crying, ‘Save the city, O Lord of the three worlds, save it from the blazing fire’ (32-36).

Hearing the bewildered cries of men, and seeing the consternation of His own people, He, their refuge, reassured them with a laugh, ‘Do not be afraid. I will protect you.’ The Lord, Who is everywhere and sees all that is, within and without, saw that it was a spirit raised by the sorcerer’s invoking Maheśvara, and He bade the discus by His side to put it down. The discus, Sudarśana, Mukunda’s weapon, shining with the brilliance of a million suns, burning like the conflagra-

tion at the dissolution of the universe, and lighting up with its splendour the sky, earth and heaven and all the directions, harried that fire. Foiled by the might of the weapon of the Wielder of the Discus, the fire raised by sorcery retreated, O King. And enveloping Vārāṇasi, it burnt him (Sudakṣiṇa), who had raised it, along with his priests and his people. Vishnu's discus then entered Vārāṇasi, and burnt it down, with its lofty terraces, halls, temples and shops, with its numberless *gopuras* and palaces, its store-rooms and treasures, its stables for elephants, horses and chariots, and its dining halls. Having burnt down all Vārāṇasi, Vishnu's discus Sudarśana returned to the side of Krishna of the flawless deeds. The man who relates, or hears related, with his mind under control, this exploit of the illustrious Lord, will be released from all sin (37-43).

CHAPTER LXVII

RAMA SLAYS DVIVIDA

The King said : ' I should like to hear more of the exploits of Rama of the marvellous deeds, of Him of the illimitable and incomparable puissance : tell me of other exploits of the Lord '(1).

Sri Suka said : Naraka had a friend, the doughty ape Dvividā, minister of Sugriva and brother of Mainda. To discharge the debt of friendship by laying waste the kingdom, the ape set fire to towns and hamlets, mines and cow-colonies. Sometimes he would pull out huge rocks and with them smash the surrounding region, particularly in the Ānarta country where lived Hari, his friend's slayer. Sometimes, getting into the sea, he, who had the strength of ten thousand elephants, would submerge the adjacent country, heaving up the water with his hands. The scamp destroyed the trees in the hermitage grounds and fouled the sacred fires with ordure and urine. Puffed up with pride, he immured men and women in mountain hollows and caves, as the wasp does the worm, and blocked the entrance with rocks (2-6).

Going about harrying the country in this way and

violating the modesty of family women, he once heard charming music coming from the Raivataka mountain and went there. There he beheld Rama, the Lord of the Yadus, who wore a lotus garland, and was beautiful in every limb. He was singing, surrounded by a bevy of lovely women, His eyes rolling in intoxication from the heady liquor He had drunk, His body splendid like the elephant in rut. The wicked monkey shook trees, himself perched on a branch, and made typical monkey noises, drawing attention to himself. Seeing the audacity of the ape, the young women in the company of Baladeva, mercurial like all their sex, and fond of fun, laughed uproariously. The monkey made faces at them, wrinkling his eye-brows, staring at them and showing them his behind, under the very eyes of Rama. Angered by this, Bala, foremost of smiters, threw a stone at him. Dodging it, the monkey seized the wine jug; and the knave mocked Him, provoking Him with his laughter. The impudent creature broke the jug and tugged at the clothes of the women, tearing them. Being strong and overflowing with animal spirits, he treated Bala with contempt, offending Him (7-16).

Angered by his impudence and the way he was harassing those regions, He seized His plough and club to slay the foe. The exceedingly powerful Dvividā rushed upon Bala with a tree raised high in his hand and hit Him on the head with it. Sankarshaṇa, the strong, stood like a rock, receiving that blow on His head, and He then hit him with his club Sunanda. His brain-pan bashed in by the club, and the blood streaming down, he looked like a mountain with a vein of ore. Unmindful of the blow, he pulled out another tree by sheer strength, and stripping it of its leaves struck at Bala in a frenzy of fury. Bala shattered it into a hundred splinters. He struck Him again in his wrath with another tree; that too He cut to pieces. He went on thus battling against the Lord, pulling up by the roots one tree after another as each was cut down, till not one was left standing in the forest all around. Then in his anger he showered Bala with rocks; to the Wielder of the club pulverizing them was child's play. The monkey chief with arms like palm trees thereupon doubled his fists,

and bearing down on Rohiṇi's son, hit Him on the chest. The Yādava Prince, laying aside the club and the plough, hit him in His wrath with both hands so violently on the collar bone that he fell, vomiting blood. The mountain, with its tarns and trees, was rocked by his fall, O mighty scion of the Kurus, like a boat on the water tossed by the wind. 'Victory !' 'Salutations !' 'Well done, well done !' were the cries that greeted Him from the gods, the Siddhas and the great sages who had stationed themselves in the sky, as they showered flowers. Having thus killed Dvivida, who was ravaging the land, the Lord returned to His own city, the people singing His praises (16-28).

CHAPTER LXVIII

RAMA HUMBLER THE KAURAVAS

Srī Suka said : The ever-victorious Sāmba, son of Jāmbavati, carried off Lakshmaṇā, the daughter of Duryodhana, when she was making the bride's choice. This angered the Kauravas ; they said, 'The ill-bred youngster has slighted us and forcibly carried off the unwilling maid. Let us place the saucy fellow under restraint. What can the Vṛshṇis do, who rule over a kingdom which we gave them, and which has prospered by our favour? If the Vṛshṇis, hearing of their boy's detention, come here, their pride will be humbled, and they will quiet down like the senses when they are put under the curb'. Saying this, Karna, Sala, Bhūri, Yajnaketu and Duryodhana proceeded, with the approval of the doyen¹ of the Kurus, to try and take Sāmba prisoner. Seeing Dhṛtarāshtra's men coming in hot pursuit, Sāmba, the great charioteer, faced them alone like a lion, his splendid bow grasped in his hand. Wishing to capture him, the bowmen, led by Karna, angrily shouted, 'Stop ! Stop !' and when they came nearer, showered him with arrows. That marvellous boy, the son of the Yadus, could not brook being hit by the Kurus, O best of the Kurus, any more than the lion will, an attack by lesser beasts. Twanging his splendid bow, the heroic

¹ Bhīshma, who was one of the six who attacked Sāmba (S); 'the Kuru elders' (R.)

one struck simultaneously every one of the six charioteers, Karna and the rest, with as many arrows, four for the four horses, one for the driver, and one for the charioteer, the master-bowman himself; and they all admired that feat of his. But they dislodged him from his chariot; four of them struck down the four horses, one killed the driver, while the sixth cut his bow. Depriving him of his chariot with great difficulty, the victorious Kurus tied him up and returned to their city, taking with them the young man and their own maid (1-12).

Coming to hear of that from Nārada, the Yadus were indignant, and by Ugrasena's order, made ready for war against the Kurus, O King. But Rama, Who did not want enmity between the Kurus and the Vṛshnis, pacified the Chiefs of the Yadus, who had armed themselves for a fight. And He, Dispeller of the sins of Kali, Himself went to Hastināpura, in a chariot blazing like the sun, accompanied by Brahmanas and the elders of the clan, like the moon with the planets. Arriving at Gajāhwaya, Rama halted in the wood on the outskirts and sent Uddhava to Dhṛtarāshtra to ascertain his intentions. And he, making his obeisance in due form to the son of Ambikā, to Bhīshma, Droṇa, Bāhlika and Duryodhana, informed them of Rama's arrival. They rejoiced to hear that Rama, the best of friends, was come. And duly honouring Uddhava, they went to meet Him with glad offerings. Coming into His presence, they welcomed Him with the ceremonial offer of a cow and *arghya* in the time-honoured way; and those among them who knew His greatness humbly bowed their heads to Bala (13-19).

When they had made mutual enquiries about health and welfare and were assured that all was well with their relations, Rama spoke boldly: 'Hear attentively what the Lord Ugrasena, King of Kings, bids you do, and do it without delay. "Since I should like to maintain unity among relations, I shall overlook your putting under restraint one who was true to his *dharma*, after overpowering him in an unrighteous fight, in which you were many against one" (20-22).

Hearing those spirited words of Baladeva, fully conscious of His power, zest and strength, and

mirroring His puissance, the Kurus were enraged ; and they retorted, ' Ah ! how wonderful and strange the way time works its indefeasible will ! Here is foot-wear presuming to climb on to the crowned head. Having allied ourselves with these Vršṇis by marriage, we conferred a throne on them and admitted them to equality of status, allowed them to sit with us, to bed and board with us. By our leave they enjoy the honours,¹ the two chowrie fans, the conch and the white umbrella ; they have crown and throne and couch. But no more shall these Yadus flaunt those insignia of royalty, which are employed to the injury of the giver, like milk fed to serpents. These Yādavas, who owe their prosperity to our goodwill, dare now to issue commands to us unabashed ! How could even Indra hope to annex what the Kurus, headed by Bhishma, Droṇa, Arjuna and others, had not granted, any more than sheep could snatch the lion's kill ! ' (23-28).

Sri Suka said : Having used these most improper words to Rama, those vulgar men, who were puffed up with the pride of high birth, connections and prosperity, went back to their city, O foremost of the Bharatas. When He saw the outrageous behaviour of the Kurus and heard their foul words, Rama's mind was in a turmoil of rage, and He looked terrible as He spoke, breaking out into angry laughter again and again : ' Clearly these wicked men do not want peace, being filled with overweening pride from many causes. They are best tamed by chastisement, as beasts are by the stick. Here I come, wishing to live in peace with them, having with great difficulty pacified the Yadus, who were violently agitated, and Krishna, who was angry. But these dull-witted knaves itching for mischief have treated me with arrogant contempt and spoken insulting words. Ugrasena has no right to command, has he, Paramount Lord of the Bhojas, Vršṇis and Andhakas though he is, and Śakra and other Guardians of the worlds do his bidding ! He who could annex Sudharmā and bring away the *pārijāta* tree for His own enjoyment, is not worthy of the honour of being seated with these people, it seems.

¹ These seven are the insignia of imperial power, the use of which by others would be punishable (V.)

He, the Lord and Master of the Goddess Śrī, the sovereign mistress of all the worlds, who worships His feet, is not fit, we are assured, to claim the insignia of a king of men. What is a king's throne to Him, the pollen of Whose lotus feet is borne on their splendid crests by the Guardians of the worlds; those feet, which confer sanctity on the stream to which all the world resorts for purifying itself, and which we, Brahmā, Bhava, the Goddess Śrī, and I myself, all of us but fractions of a fraction of His puissance, have borne on our heads for endless years! The Vṛshṇis rule, do they, over a bit of territory given them as a gift by the Kurus? We are the foot-wear, it seems, the Kurus the head itself! Who that has the power to chastise will tolerate for a moment the offensive ravings, as of men in their cups, of these haughty men, drunk with power? This day I shall rid the earth of the Kauravas.' So saying, He started up in a blaze of anger, snatching His plough, as if He would burn the three worlds. Digging up the city of Gajāhvaya with the point of His plough, He dragged it forward, resolved in his wrath to tumble it into the Gangā (29-41).

Seeing the city, thus pulled, rocking like a boat in deep waters, and on the point of plunging into the Gangā, the bewildered Kauravas and their families, taking with them Sāmba and Lakshmanā, threw themselves on His mercy, desperate to save their lives; they implored the Supreme Lord with joined palms, praying, 'Rama, O Rama, Support of all that is, we do not know Thy power. Be pleased to pardon the offence of ignorant and stupid men. Thou art the sole Cause of the preservation, creation and destruction of the universe, Thyself needing no support. And they speak of the worlds as the playthings with which Thou playest, O Omnipotent Lord. Thou Thyself, O Ananta of the thousand heads, bearest lightly on Thy head this terrestrial globe. And at the dissolution of the universe Thou, having retracted it within Thyself, layest¹ Thyself down, the Sole Existent, the One without a second. Thou, O Lord, That hast assumed a body of pure

¹ (*alt.*) 'remainest alone on Śésha, Thy couch'. He is here identified with Vishnu Himself.

sattva, art roused to anger, not by hatred nor by malice, but for the correction of the erring, whoever they might be, in the interests of the world. Salutations to Thee, O Thou That art the soul in all things, That wieldest all power, That knowest no wane. Salutations to Thee, Whose handiwork is the universe ; we take refuge in Thee' (42-48).

Srī Suka said : When they, terrified at the rocking of their city, thus came to Him as suppliants and propitiated Him, Bala was gracious, and He reassured them, saying, ' Do not be afraid '. Duryodhana, who loved his daughter, gave as bride-present twelve-hundred sixty-year old elephants, ten thousand horses, six thousand chariots of burnished gold, blazing like the sun, and a thousand serving maids decked with gold necklaces. Accepting all that, the exalted Lord, the Chief of the Sātvatas, went home accompanied by his son and daughter-in-law, with the good wishes of friends. Entering His own city, the Wielder of the Plough met his kinsmen, Who loved Him, and narrated to the Yadu Chiefs assembled in the audience hall all that he had done in the Kurū country. To this day this city bears the marks of Rama's prowess, the part of it on the southern bank of the Gangā being uniformly higher (49-54.)

CHAPTER LXIX

NĀRADA SEES THE LORD AS HOUSEHOLDER

Srī Suka said : Hearing of the slaying of Naraka and of Krishna's wedding a large number of women afterwards, Nārada was eager to go and see. Excited by curiosity, as he reflected, ' How wonderful that He, a single individual, should have married sixteen thousand women, each in her own home, severally and simultaneously ! ' he desired to see these things for himself. And he went to Dvāravati where the woods in the outskirts and the gardens in flower resounded with the song of birds and the hum of bees ; where the swans and *sāras* cranes uttered their loud notes on the lakes filled with blue and white lotuses and water-lilies in bloom ; where nine hundred thousand noble edifices of crystal and silver reared their heads, gleaming bright with their

emeralds and furnished with gold-and-gem fittings ; where the eye was taken with the beauty of well-planned royal ways, roads, squares and shopping centres, dining halls and assembly rooms and temples ; where the streets, the inner and outer courtyards and house-fronts were well sprinkled with water, and the flags waving from flagstuffs kept out the sun (1-6).

Arriving in the city, he went to the noble palace of Hari, to which the Guardians of the worlds paid their respects. It contained sixteen thousand spacious apartments, housing Hari's spouses, on which the celestial architect had lavished all his skill. And he entered one of those magnificent homes. It was supported on pillars of coral with ceilings of lapis lazuli, and walls and polished floors of sapphire, and it was furnished with canopies, the creation of Tvashtā, from which were hung ropes of pearl in many a pattern, and with divans of ivory set with rare brilliants. It was imposing with its serving maids clad in fine raiment and adorned with gold necklaces, and its male servitors dressed sumptuously in coat and turban, and wearing jewelled ear-pendants. A multitude of jewelled lamps dispelled the darkness within, and the peacocks perched on their curved wooden perches of marvellous workmanship danced, cawing loudly, my good sir, mistaking for clouds the smoke of the incense of aloes issuing through the windows (7-12).

Going into the house the Brahmana beheld the Lord of the Sātvatas in the company of the dame¹ of the house, who was fanning Him with a gold-handled *chowri*, while a thousand serving maids, of the same age as herself, and like herself in disposition, beauty and attire, constantly waited upon her. The moment He saw him, the exalted Lord, foremost of the upholders of Dharma, got up from the couch of Śrī and bowed low, His head adorned with the crown touching his feet, and then with joined palms invited him to occupy His own seat. Washing his feet, He sprinkled that water on His own head ; for, foremost of the teachers of the worlds though He was, and the water that had washed His feet purified all else, was He not, too, the Lord of the

¹ Rukmiṇī : she is referred to as Śrī in the next verse.

good, the expressive name, 'the Lord who is devoted to the Brahmana' being peculiarly appropriate to Him? The Primordial R̥shi, Narayana, the Friend of Nara, honouring the divine sage in the manner ordained, engagingly asked him, in few but nectar-sweet words, 'What can I do for thee, O blessed sage?' (13-16).

Nārada answered: 'That Thou, O Lord That art the Master of all the worlds, hast loving kindness for all men, while dealing out chastisement to the wicked, does not astonish me; for we know well enough, O Lord That art much-hymned, that Thou art incarnate of Thy free will for the preservation and protection of the world and its supreme good. I have this day beheld Thy feet, the salvation of mankind, which even Brahmā and others of unplumbed wisdom can only meditate upon in the core of the heart, and by holding on to which those who have fallen into the deep well of *samsāra* are lifted out of it. Vouchsafe me Thy grace, so that Thy memory may ever abide with me and I may live in constant meditation on those blessed feet' (17-18).

Then Nārada entered the house of another consort of Krishna, wishing to see more of the creative richness of the power of the Lord of the master-yogis. He saw Him playing dice there with His beloved and Uddhava. He was received with the utmost devotion, the Lord advancing to meet him and showing him the customary honours, such as the offer of a seat, and so on. And he was asked by Him, as if He did not know, 'When did you come, Blessed One? What indeed can the likes of us, who never know fulfilment, do for those that have no lack? But still, tell us, O Brahman, that our life may know auspiciousness'. But he, marvelling, rose silently and went to another house. There he found Govinda dandling His infant children. In another house he saw Him getting ready for His bath. At one place he found Him worshipping the sacred fires and performing the five daily sacrifices; at another feeding Brahmanas and partaking of the remainder; somewhere else, performing His 'sandhyā' worship and reciting the sacred Gāyatrī. Elsewhere, he saw the elder brother of Gada engaged in practising swordsmanship with sword and shield, or exercising with horses, elephants and chariots; resting

on His couch, while minstrels sang His praises, or conferring with Uddhava and other counsellors on matters of state; delighting in water-sports, surrounded by courtesans; gifting cows, well-decorated, to worthy Brahmanas; listening to the recital of the epics and the Purāṇas and other auspicious literature; conversing with His beloved at home and laughing at the recollection of humorous incidents; performing acts of Dharma in one place, pursuing wealth and pleasure at another; meditating by Himself in a secluded place on the Primordial Puruṣa Who is beyond Prakṛti; waiting upon respected elders and pleasing them by fulfilling their wishes, lavishing wealth and goods on them and showing them all honour. He saw Keśava in the act of breaking off friendly relations with some powers, conciliating others; deliberating with Rama to promote the weal of the worthy; solemnising with due rites and all opulence the weddings of His sons and daughters at the proper age with suitable bridegrooms and brides; celebrating gorgeously such auspicious occasions as the arrival and departure of His children, making all the world wonder at the magnificence of these festivals in honour of the progeny of the Lord of the master-yogis; propitiating all the gods with great sacrifices; executing charitable works of public utility such as digging wells, planting gardens, building *mathas*, and so on. Elsewhere He saw Him start for the chase, mounted on a Sindhi hunter, and attended by the Yadu Chiefs, to kill animals fit for offering to the gods; or he found the Lord of yoga moving disguised among His subjects or in the women's apartments, to ascertain what was passing through their minds (19-36).

Then Nārada said to Hrishikēśa with a smile, having seen the glory of the Lord's *yogic* power exhibited even when He was intent on conforming to the ways of men, 'By waiting humbly on Thy blessed feet, O Lord of yoga, I have seen a sight denied to even the master-yogis, the display, in Thine own person¹ of the plenitude of Thy *yogic* powers. Give me leave to depart, O Lord, I shall wander through the worlds that are bathed

¹ S. (*alt.*) 'the reflection in my mind'.

in Thy glory, singing the play Thou playest, sanctifying the earth' (37-39).

The Lord told him, 'I am the expounder of Dharma, O Brahman. I practise it Myself, and commend it in others. It is to set an example to the world that I practise it. Let this not confound you¹, My son' (40).

Srī Suka said: Thus vouchsafed His grace, he saw Him and Him alone in all the houses, discharging the many enjoined duties that purify the householder. Having repeatedly experienced, with mounting excitement, the plenitude of the *yogic* power of Krishna of the limitless puissance, the sage could only marvel. Hospitably entertained by Krishna, Who showed Himself devoted to the pursuit of Dharma, Artha and Kāma, he was extremely happy; and he went his way, his mind centred on Him. Thus, walking in the ways of men, Narayana, Who assumes many a form for the coming into being of all creatures, found delight, my good sir, in the bashful and loving glances of His sixteen thousand spouses, and their gay laughter. He who sings, or hears recounted, or rejoices over the deeds that Hari, the Author of the destruction, creation and preservation of the universe, did in this world, deeds which none else could have done, will develop devotion to the exalted Lord, Who is the Way of Liberation (40-45).

CHAPTER LXX

THE LORD HEARS THE KINGS' MESSENGER

Srī Suka said: The spouses of Mādhava, who had each the arm of her husband round her neck, cursed the cocks that crowed at the approach of dawn, distressed by the prospect of separation. The birds, roused from slumber by the humming of bees caused by the pleasant breezes from the woods of *mandāra*, chattered gaily, awakening Krishna like bards. The daughter of Vidarbha's King, who was in the arms of her Beloved, could not abide that exceedingly auspicious hour, as she knew

¹ 'and lead you into thinking that I attach any intrinsic importance to it, so far as I am concerned' (S.)

it must interrupt His embraces. Getting up at early dawn and making His ablutions, Mādhava meditated, with a serene mind, on the Ātman, Which is known as the Brahma, and is beyond Prakṛti ; Which is unconditioned and impartite, eternal and self-luminous, being ever free from nescience by Its very nature ; Which is immaculate Existence and Bliss, as evidenced by Its powers, the causes of the creation and destruction of the universe. Then, taking His bath in the enjoined manner in pure water, and donning fresh clothes, the foremost of men performed the *sandhyā* and other ordained rites ; and after making oblations in the fire, recited the Gāyatri silently. Offering His prayers at the sun's rising, and pouring out water libations to the gods, the sages and the manes, His own fractions, and honouring the family elders, He, who knew His own mind, gave away every day as gifts to Brahmanas, who were adorned becomingly, 13,084 cows—gentle animals and good milkers that had brought forth their first calf—along with the calves, their horns being covered with gold and their hooves with silver, and with ropes of pearl and scarves on their necks ; and He gave them at the same time silks, deer-skins and gingelly seeds. Offering His salutations to the cows, the Brahmanas, and all the gods, to old men, respected elders and all creatures who were all part-manifestations of Him, the Ātman, He touched those things which it was auspicious to touch. Then He adorned His body—that ornament of the world of men—with raiment and jewels that were distinctively His, and with celestial wreaths and unguents. After taking a look at ghee, at a mirror, a cow, a bull, a Brahmana, and the images of the gods, He granted the petitions of men of all *varṇas* who lived in the city or were in His household ; He found joy in making His subjects happy by fulfilling their wishes. Distributing wreaths, *pan* and unguents to Brahmanas first, and then to His friends and subjects and to His consorts, He accepted them for Himself (1-13).

By that time His marvellous chariot, drawn by the horses Sugrīva and the rest, would be at the door and the driver waiting upon Him with joined palms. Clasping them in His, He got into the chariot, accompanied by

Sātyaki and Uddhava, like the sun ascending the mountain of the East ; and He issued forth smiling, being reluctantly released by the bashful and loving looks of His womenfolk, and carrying off their hearts with Him. Surrounded by the Vṛshṇis, He entered the audience hall known as Sudharmā ; those who are seated in it are not subject to the six human disabilities, my friend. Taking the seat of honour, the mighty Lord, first among the Yadus, with the Yadu chieftains about Him, shone like the moon in the sky amidst the clustered stars, lighting up the quarters with His lustre. The jesters entertained the Lord with their humorous sallies, O King, and different companies of dance-masters and dancers gave performances, dancing and singing to the accompaniment of *mṛdanga*, *vīṇā* and *muraja*, of flute, cymbals and conch-shell, while bards, minstrels and heralds chanted His praises. A few Brahmanas present, who had remained seated, expounded the meaning of the Vedas, and, being skilled speakers, recounted the stories of the great kings of hallowed memory who had lived in days of yore (14-21).

To that hall came a man whom no one there had seen before. The door-keepers announcing his arrival, he was ushered into the Lord's presence. Prostrating himself before the great Lord, he delivered a doleful message with clasped hands, telling of the sufferings in captivity of the twenty thousand kings who had refused to make their submission to Jarāsandha during his triumphal progress, and had been taken and confined by him in the fortress of Girivraja. ' Krishna, O Krishna of the measureless glory, Destroyer of the fears of those who throw themselves on Thy mercy, we who are dominated by the notion of difference and go in terror of *samsāra*, take refuge in Thee. Salutations to Thee, Who as unwinking time, the puissant destroyer, snappeth in a trice the life to which men desperately cling, when they, absorbed in the wrong kind of activity, forget to do their own duty, which would redound to their welfare, of worshipping Thee as Thou hast bidden. Thou, Ruler of the universe, O Lord, art incarnate with an *aṁśa* of Thyself for the protection of the good and the destruction of the wicked. How then can some other (like

Jarāsandha) transgress Thy command?¹ Or must people still suffer the consequences of their own past actions? These things baffle us. The pleasures that attend a sovereign seem to us a dream now, O Lord, being beyond our reach. And, with a body which is as good as dead, since it is a constant prey to fears, we labour under a load of care.² Succumbing to Thy Power of Māyā, we languish in misery, when we could have realized the bliss inherent in the Self, as do by Thy grace those who have rid themselves of all desire. Therefore, O Lord, Whose feet dispel the sorrows of those that humble themselves before them, Thou must free us from the bondage imposed by our own *karma*, which goes by the name of 'King of Magadha'. Possessing in his own person the strength of a thousand elephants of the Matanga breed, he has impounded the kings in his house, like a lion holding up a huddle of ewes. O Thou, Whose discus is ever ready to smite, he who engaged Thee in battle eighteen times, only to be vanquished again and again, till at last he won for once, defeating Thee of the limitless valour because Thou lovedst to play the mortal, is so puffed up with pride that he has taken to tormenting us, Thy dependants. Do Thou now as seems best to Thee, O Invincible.' The messenger concluded, 'Thus they, who are suppliants at Thy feet, implore Thee, longing for a sight of Thy face, Pray succour them in their misery' (22-31).

Srī Suka said: As the kings' messenger was saying this, the divine sage (Nārada) of the supernal splendour, wearing a pile of tawny matted hair, appeared like the sun before them. On seeing him, the Lord Krishna, Paramount Lord of all the Rulers of the worlds, rose from His seat and bowed low before him in all joy, and so did the members of the assembly, and all His followers. He received him with all honours as ordained, and when he had taken his seat, spoke thus, pleasing him by His engaging sincerity and devoutness: 'I trust that the three worlds are free from all cause of fear. Great

¹ By persecuting the good, as Jarāsandha did. The implied remonstrance is, that neither of these things being possible without the Lord's acquiescence, He should not allow them. ² Even in captivity they worry about family, and so on.

indeed is our gain, Blessed One, from Thy constant traversing of the worlds. Nothing happens in the Lord's creation that is not known to Thee. Tell us, pray, what the Pāṇdavas have it in their minds to do' (32-36).

Srī Nārada answered, 'O Lord That art supremely great, That abidest with all Thy powers in Thy creatures, Thy splendour hidden like that of fire, I have seen many a time that insuperable Māyā of Thine which confounds the Creator himself; so I do not marvel at Thy questions. Who can truly know Thy designs, Who createst and retractest this universe, which is endowed with an appearance of reality by Thy Māyā? I offer my salutations to Thee that art unique and ineffable in Thy essence. I take refuge in Thee that blazonest the beacon of Thy glory, taking birth in this world and playing Thy play for the benefit of the *jīva* who is caught up in the transmigratory cycle because of the body that is his bane, and knows not how to release himself. Still, I will tell Thee, O Brahma¹ masquerading as a mortal, what the King, Thy father's sister's son and Thy devotee, intends. The King, Pāṇdu's son, desiring empire, would worship Thee by offering the Rājasūya sacrifice, first of all sacrifices. Be pleased to signify Thy approval, O Lord. The gods and such like, and the kings of renown will come to see Thee, great Lord, at that splendid sacrifice. Even the lowest of the low are purified, O Supreme Ruler, by hearing of Thy glory, by singing Thy praises, and by contemplating on Thee, the Brahma in concrete form; what doubt, then, about those that have seen and touched Thee, O Thou That art the embodied good fortune of the worlds, Whose immaculate glory, spread like a splendid canopy over the ends of the worlds, and celebrated in heaven, on earth and in the nether regions, purifies the universe, even as does the water that has washed Thy feet and is known to fame as the Mandākinī in the celestial worlds, as the Bhogavati in the worlds below and as the Gangā here on earth?' (37-44).

Srī Suka said: Seeing that his people, assembled there, did not agree, being eager for victory², Keśava spoke with a smile to Uddhava, using pleasing words.

¹ (v. r.) 'O Paramātmān'. ² Over Jarāsandha.

The Lord said, ' You are our principal eye ; for you are our well-wisher, and you know how counsel may be brought to fruitful issue. So tell us what we should do now. We shall put faith in it, and do as you advise.' Thus asked by his Master Who, omniscient though He was, spoke like a simple man, he received it with bowed head as a command and spoke (45-47).

CHAPTER LXXI UDDHAVA'S COUNSEL

Sri Suka said : Having heard the divine sage, and knowing the opinion of the members of the assembly as well as of Krishna, the sagacious Uddhava spoke. He said, ' You should, O Lord, not only help your aunt's son to the sacrifice he is offering, as the sage has said, but also extend protection to those who have sought refuge with you. It is only the man who has conquered all parts of the globe that may offer the Rājasūya sacrifice, O Lord. And the defeat of Jarāsandha would to my mind serve both purposes. Thereby we, too, shall be gaining greatly ; and you will be winning glory, O Govinda, by setting free the imprisoned kings. For that King, who is the equal of ten thousand elephants in strength, cannot be halted by any one, however strong, other than Bhīma, who is his equal in strength. He should be encountered and vanquished in a duel, not when he is supported by his army of a hundred *akshauhīnīs*. Being a lover of Brahmanas, he will not deny them anything. Let Vṛkodara, disguised as a Brahmana, go and solicit his favour. Fighting a duel with him in your presence, he will kill him without a doubt. In the creation of the universe, and in its destruction, Hiraṇyagarbha and Sarva, respectively, are but instruments of your will, O Supreme Lord, functioning as time that is formless. The consorts of the kings in their homes shall sing your splendid exploit of slaying the foe and effecting the release of their own spouses, even as the Gopis sing your glory, and as the sages who have found sanctuary with you, and we, extol the liberation of the lord of the elephants, of the daughter of Janaka, and of your own parents. The slaying of Jarāsandha will, O Krishna,

serve many purposes. All this will come about largely as the result of the fruition of past *karma*; and you too are for the performance of the sacrifice.' Sri Suka said: The Yadu elders, the divine sage and Krishna heartily applauded Uddhava's counsel, which was well-reasoned and would be productive of good all round (1-11).

Then the Lord, Devaki's son, taking the elders' permission to go, gave orders to His servants, Dāruka, Jaitra and others, to make ready for the journey. Sending off the women of the household with their children and attendants, He took leave of Sankarshaṇa and the King of the Yadus, and got into His own chariot, flying the Garuda flag, which the driver had brought, O slayer of the foe. And He issued forth, surrounded by His own army, formidable with its array of commanders of chariot and elephant forces, and of horse and infantry, as all the quarters resounded with the din of *myḍanga* and drum, of kettle-drum, conch-shell and *go-mukha*. His faithful spouses, adorned with priceless jewels, raiment, unguents and wreaths, followed Achyuta, riding with their children in litters, on horseback, or in golden palanquins, and guarded by retainers armed with sword and buckler. Their female attendants, and the courtesans, all suitably adorned, were carried in litters or on the backs of camels, oxen, buffaloes, donkeys and mules, or rode in carts, having first securely loaded on pack animals tents made of reed, blankets, clothes and other requirements. That army, making tumultuous din with its huge flags, its umbrellas, and fly-whisks, its splendid weapons, ornaments, tiaras and coats of mail, shone by day under the sun's rays, like the ocean in a turmoil, with its whales and billows (12-17).

Then the divine sage, having heard His resolve, and received the salutations of the Lord of the Yadus, Who entertained him with all honours, rose into the sky, cherishing Him in his heart, all his senses filled with bliss at having seen Mukunda. The Lord spoke to the messenger of the kings, gladdening him with these words: 'O messenger, let them have no fears, I shall see that the King of Magadha is slain'. Thus told, the messenger left, and reported faithfully to the kings. And they, yearning for freedom, eagerly looked forward to seeing

Sauri. Traversing the Ānarta, Sauveera and Maru regions, and passing through Kurukshetra, Hari crossed mountains and rivers, and passed towns and villages, cow-colonies, and mines. Crossing the Drshadvati and the Sarasvatī, Mukunda passed through the Pānchāla and Matsya countries, and reached Indraprastha (18-22).

Hearing that He was come, Whom it is rarely given to men to see, Ajātaśatru was happy; and he came forth from the city, accompanied by his preceptors and friends. With song and music and the swelling strains of Vedic chants, he joyfully hastened to meet Hrishikeśa, as the senses rush to meet the life-breath. Seeing the much-loved Krishna after a long time, the Pāndava embraced Him again and again, his heart melting with love. Embracing Mukunda, the pure and holy sanctum of Ramā, the King was purged of his sins; and he was supremely content, all thoughts of the world forgot, as his eyes filled with tears and his body thrilled. Bhīma was happy as he embraced his uncle's son with a radiant face, his senses in a tumult under the onrush of love. The twins and Arjuna embraced Achyuta, the bosom friend, their eyes streaming with tears of joy. Then Arjuna embraced Him again, and the twins prostrated themselves before Him. He himself made His obeisances to the Brahmanas and the elders according to their degree. Respectfully welcomed by the Kurus, Śrñjayas and Kekeyas, He cordially reciprocated. The bards and minstrels uttered panegyrics, the singers and jesters danced and sang to the accompaniment of *mṛdanga* and conch-shell, *pataha*, *vīṇā*, *paṇava* and *go-mukha*, and the Brahmanas extolled Him of the lotus eyes (23-30).

And the Lord, foremost of those whose praises purify, entered the decorated city, surrounded by His friends, and hearing His praises sung. He beheld that city of the King of the Kurus, with its highways watered with the ichor of tuskers in rut; splendid with its fine banners, its golden arches and full water-pots set out in welcome, and its men and women bright after their baths, attired in new and fine clothes, and adorned with jewels, wreaths and unguents; delightful with the blazing lights

and the heaps of flowers before every house, the fragrant incense streaming from the windows, and the pennons gleaming ; and crowded with mansions having massive silver turrets crowned with gold pots. Hearing that He was come, Whom all men devoured with their eyes, the young women rushed to behold Him on the royal way, dropping their work instantly, or leaving their husbands in bed, their ribbons and head-bands coming undone in their excitement. When they saw Krishna coming with His consorts along the royal way, crowded with elephants, horses, chariots and men, they climbed on to the house-tops and showered flowers on Him ; and embracing Him in their hearts, they bade Him welcome with their smiling glances. Looking at the spouses of Krishna, as they came like stars accompanying the moon, the women said, ' What did they do to merit this good fortune, that He, the crown and summit of creation, should afford their eyes a perennial joy, with the witchery of His genial laughter and playful look ? ' The citizens and the chiefs of the guilds of artificers, gathered in knots at various points with auspicious things in their hands, welcomed Krishna with all honours, thus wiping off their sins. Greeted by the women of the royal household, who advanced with joyous excitement to receive Him, Mukunda entered the royal palace (31-38).

Prthā, on seeing her brother's son, Krishna, the Lord of the three worlds, rose in great joy from the couch on which she had been sitting with her daughter-in-law, and embraced Him. Having brought Govinda, the Paramount Lord of the great gods, to his home with all solicitude, the King was so distracted with joy that he did not know how to set about doing him the honours of the house. Krishna prostrated Himself before His father's sister and the spouses of respected elders. And to Him Krishnā (Draupadi) and His own sister made their obeisances. Directed by her mother-in-law, Krishnā duly honoured all the consorts of Krishna—Rukminī, Satyā, Bhadrā, Jāmbavatī, Kālindī, Mitra-vindā (Saibyā), the faithful Nāgnajitī and others that had come—presenting them with raiment and garlands and adorning them. With ever fresh delights Dharma-

rāja entertained Janārdana, along with His army, attendants, ministers and consorts; when He, with Phālguna for His inseparable associate, saw to it that the god of fire was propitiated by the offering up of the Khāndava forest as sacrifice, and the rescued Maya built a celestial assembly hall for the King. He (Kṛishna) sojourned there for some months, to please the King; and He diverted Himself, going out riding in a chariot with Phālguna, surrounded by fighting men (39-46).

CHAPTER LXXII

BHĪMA SLAYS JARĀSANDHA

Srī Suka said: One day Yudhishtira, seated in the assembly hall amidst the sages, Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, his brothers and preceptors, family elders, kinsmen, relations and connections, addressed Kṛishna in their hearing with all due deference. Yudhishtira said: 'I wish to worship your holy *aṁśas* by offering the Rājasūya, the foremost of sacrifices; you must help me to accomplish the wish, O Lord. Those pure souls who constantly wait on your sandals, which dissipate sins, O Lord of the lotus navel, who contemplate on them and utter their praises, obtain liberation from the cycle of birth and death, as well as realizing their wishes, should they have any; not others, O Paramount Lord. Let this world see for itself, O God of gods, the greatness of devoted service to your lotus feet; manifest to it, O Lord, the true state of those, among the Kurus and the Śrñjayas, who are devoted to you, and those who are not. You, the Brahma, the Soul in all things, looking with an equal eye on all, and being ever established in the enjoyment of the Bliss of the Self, will certainly not entertain in your mind such distinctions as "Mine" and "Not Mine". But your grace, like that of the celestial wishing tree, descends upon them that devote themselves to your service. Their good fortune is in proportion to their devotion. There is no contradiction here' (1-6).

The Lord answered: 'You have resolved well, O King; it will lead, O harrier of the foe, to your auspicious

cious fame dominating all the worlds. This first of sacrifices will be acceptable to the sages, the manes and the gods, and to all of us, your friends, to all creatures, in fact, valiant one. Having vanquished all kings and brought the world under your control, you may collect the materials needed and offer the great sacrifice. These brothers of yours, O King, are partial incarnations of the Guardians of the worlds. By your self-conquest, you have won Me, who am not amenable to those who have not subdued their senses. No one, not even if he be a god, let alone a king of men, and whatever his prowess, renown, opulence or resources, can overcome him who is devoted to Me' (7-11).

Srī Suka said : He was overjoyed to hear those words of the Lord ; his lotus face beaming with satisfaction, he charged his brothers, filled with the puissance of Vishnu, with the task of conquering the countries in all quarters of the globe. He despatched Sahadeva to the South with the Śrñjayas, Nakula to the West with the Matsyas, Savyasācī to the North with the Kekayas and Vṛkodara to the East with the Madrakas. Vanquishing the kings by their strength, the heroic ones brought a vast quantity of treasure from all the quarters to Ajātaśatru, who was to perform the sacrifice, O King. When the King, hearing that Jarāsandha was still unvanquished, was lost in thought, Hari, the Primordial Lord, told him of the expedient that Uddhava had suggested. The three, Bhīmasena, Arjuna and Krishna, disguising themselves as Brahmanas, went to Girivraja, my son, where lived the son of Bṛhadratha. Finding him at home, at the hour when guests are expected, those Kshattriyas disguised as Brahmanas solicited him, who was scrupulous in the discharge of his duties as a householder, and was devoted to Brahmanas, saying, ' We are guests, O King, come from afar to solicit a favour of you. Give us, if you please, what we seek of you. What is there that the forbearing will not put up with or the wicked will not do ? What is there that the generous will not give ? And who could be alien to him who looks on all with an equal eye ? He who, being able to do it, does not earn with this perishable body the undying fame that the good extol, is greatly to blame ; one can only pity

him. Hārīschandra, Rantideva¹, a man who lived by gleaned fallen ears of corn, Sibi, Bali, a hunter, a pigeon, and many others won the everlasting by means of the evanescent' (12-21).

Srī Suka said : Knowing by their voices and appearance, and by the scars left by the bowstring on the wrist, that they were Kshattriyas, whom he had seen before, he reflected, ' These are without a doubt Kshattriyas disguised as Brahmanas ; but I shall give them whatever they ask for, even if it be my life, though that is what one cannot bring oneself easily to part with. Who has not heard of the spotless fame of Bali that envelops the globe, dislodged though he was from sovereign power by Vishnu Who came in the guise of a Brahmana ? The King of the Daityas gave away the earth to Vishnu, Who came to him disguised as a Brahmana, to deprive him of his sovereign power on Indra's behalf ; though being warned, he knew who He was. What use would life be to this perishable body of the worthless Kshattriya, if it did not win infinite renown by exerting itself in the cause of Brahmanas ? ' Having come to this magnanimous resolve, he addressed Krishna, Arjuna and Vrkodara, saying, ' O Brahmanas, you may ask for whatever you want. I shall give it you, even if it be my own head.' The Lord replied, ' Fight a duel with us, if you please, O King. We are Kshattriyas, who have come seeking battle, not food. This is Vrkodara, son of Prthā, this is his brother Arjuna. And I am Krishna, their uncle's son and your enemy ' (22-27).

When he heard this, the King of the Magadhas laughed a great laugh ; provoked by what he heard, he answered, ' If it is fighting you want, you fools, you shall have it. I will not fight with you, coward that you are, who having no heart for a fight sought sanctuary in the ocean, abandoning your own city, Mathurā. This Arjuna is not of the same age as myself, nor is he specially noted for strength ; he is not my equal. Arjuna shall not fight with me. But Bhīma is my peer in strength '.

¹ Rantideva's story is told in *Mbh.* and in Ch. xxi of B. P. IX. The gleaner of fallen ears was Mudgala, whose tale also appears in *Mbh.* Sibi and the rest, like the two aforesaid, had sacrificed their lives out of compassion for those that sought their help, or remorse.

Saying this, he gave Bhīma a huge mace and took another himself, and they went to a place outside the city. Taking their stand on ground specially prepared, the valiant men, filled with the lust of battle, attacked each other with maces of adamant hardness. Wheeling to right and left, deploying themselves with striking skill, they fought like actors on the stage, a spectacular fight. The air was filled with the clatter of thunder-claps, as the maces, hurled at each other, crashed like the tusks of fighting elephants, O King. Descending with the lightning speed of their arms on each other's shoulder, hip, foot, thigh and collar-bone, the maces shattered to smithereens at the impact, like the branches of the *arka* plant with which enraged tuskers fight each other. When their maces were thus shattered, the raging fighters pummelled each other with their clenched fists hard as iron. As they fought like elephants, the din of their slaps came like the deafening peel of thunder from a cloudless sky. Being equally matched in respect of practice, strength and might, they went on punching each other with undiminished fury, and the issue remained undecided, O King. Twenty-eight days passed as they thus fought, great King, spending the nights like friends (28-40).

One day Vrkodara told his cousin, 'I cannot vanquish Jarāsandha in the fight, O Mādhava'. Knowing the circumstances of the enemy's birth and how he should meet his end, knowing too how Jarā had given him life, Hari reflected for a moment, as He infused the son of Prthā with His own vigour. Then, having thought of an expedient for killing the enemy, He of the unfailing insight took hold of a tree branch as Bhīma was **looking**, and made as though he would split it into two. Understanding what he meant, Bhīma of the immense strength, foremost of fighters, seized the enemy by the feet and threw him down. Then pressing down with his foot one foot of his, he took hold of the other with both hands and tore it apart from the groin upwards, like a great elephant tearing off a tree branch. The people saw the two split halves, each with only one foot, one thigh, one testicle, one buttock, one side of the back, one nipple, and one shoulder, one arm, one eye, one elbow and one

ear. When the Lord of the Magadhas was thus slain, there rose a great uproar. Arjuna and Achyuta embraced Bhīma and praised him. The mighty Lord, Who loves all creatures, Whose wisdom is infinite, crowned his (Jarāsandha's) son Sahadeva King of the Magadhas. And He had the Kshattriyas, kept in confinement by the King of the Magadhas, set free (41-48).

CHAPTER LXXIII

JARĀSANDHA'S ROYAL CAPTIVES

Sri Suka said : Emerging from the mountain valley in which they had been immured, after having been effortlessly defeated by him in battle, twenty thousand eight hundred Kings, covered with dirt, clad in dirty clothes, thin with hunger, wan-faced and worn out with the hardships of confinement, beheld Him, Who was dark as the rain-cloud and clad in yellow silks ; Who had the Srīvatsa mark on His breast and four arms ; Whose eyes were red as the calyx of the lotus, Whose face, with the flashing ear-pendants, was beautiful and gracious ; Who carried in His hands the mace, the lotus, the conch and the discus and wore a crown and a garland of pearls, bracelets, girdle and armlets, while the great jewel sparkled on the neck adorned by the garland of wild flowers. Looking at Him as if they would drink Him in with their eyes, relish His sweetness with their tongues, inhale His fragrance, and embrace Him with their arms, they, their sins destroyed, prostrated themselves at the feet of Hari, touching them with their heads. All the fatigue of confinement wiped out by their joy at the sight of Krishna, the Kings praised Hrshikeśa with folded hands, in these choice words. The Kings said : ' Salutations to Thee, Paramount Ruler of the great gods, Destroyer of the afflictions of those that beseech Thy mercy, waneless Lord. Save us, O Krishna, who are disgusted with life and seek refuge in Thee, from the horrid cycle of birth and death. We do not blame this King of Magadha, O Lord, our Protector, O Madhusūdana, since the fall of us, kings, from our kingdoms was brought about by Thy Grace, O omnipresent One. The King who, intoxicated with

sovereign power and opulence, throws off all self-restraint, can know no lasting good. Confounded by Thy Māyā, he looks upon fleeting good fortune as eternal. Even as silly creatures take the mirage for a sheet of water, those who lack discrimination look upon the mutations caused by Māyā as real. We who, blinded by prosperity, contended with each other in the past from the ambition to conquer the earth, and ruthlessly harried our own subjects, ignoring in our arrogance Thee, ever present death—even we long today to cherish Thy feet in our hearts, having by Thy grace been humbled in our pride and hurled down from our high estate by time, which is Thy other form, striking with awful swiftness and limitless power. Therefore we have no relish for mirage-like sovereignty, where one must slave with a body which decays every moment and is the home of all diseases; nor do we desire the fruits of action which one may enjoy in the other worlds, since they are only pleasant to hear of. Teach us how we may cherish Thy lotus feet in our hearts as we should, though we may be caught up in the cares of the world. We offer our adorations again and again to Krishna-Vāsudeva, to Hari, the Supreme Soul, to Govinda Who destroys the miseries of those who surrender themselves into His hands' (1-16).

Srī Suka said: Thus lauded by the liberated Kings, the exalted Lord, the Compassionate One, the Supreme Refuge, spoke to them in these engaging words, my son. The Lord said: 'From this day, O Kings, you shall assuredly entertain that steadfast devotion to Me, the Ātman and Ruler of all hearts, that you long for. You are fortunate, O Kings, in having resolved as you have done. And you have spoken truly. I have seen how the haughtiness that power and prosperity bring goes to a man's head. Haihaya, Nahusha, Vena, Rāvaṇa, Naraka and others, who were all of them, whether gods, Asuras or men, all-powerful, were toppled down from their high estate by the intoxication of success. Remembering that the body and all other created things must inevitably perish, you should yourselves worship Me by offering sacrifices and rule your subjects righteously, with wary self-restraint. Begetting progeny for continuing your line, taking happiness and misery, prosperity and

adversity, as they come, with an equable mind, you should go about your work with your hearts wholly intent on Me. Looking with indifference on the body and the like, ever delighting in the Self, remaining devoted to Me and thinking constantly on Me, you shall, in the end, attain Me, the Brahma' (17-23).

Srī Suka said : Having thus instructed the Kings, the exalted Lord Krishna, the Supreme Lord of the universe, detailed men and women to give them their bath. When they had bathed and adorned themselves and dined sumptuously, had been offered *pan* and shown such other courtesies as are due to royalty, he got Sahadeva to honour them with the present of raiment, ornaments, wreaths and unguents worthy of their rank. Rescued from suffering and treated with such consideration by Mukunda, the Kings with their burnished ear-pendants shone like the planets when the rains are over. Putting them in chariots decorated with gems and gold and drawn by superb horses, and making them happy with kind and courteous words, He sent them to their own countries. Freed by Krishna, the supremely great soul, from their dire straits, they departed, their minds dwelling on Him, the Lord of the universe, and His deeds. They told their subjects of what the Lord, the Most High, had done, and they zealously followed His commandments. Keśava, having got Jarāsandha slain by Bhīma, received the honours that Sahadeva lavished on Him, and went back to Khāndavaprastha accompanied by the two sons of Prthā. Arriving there, they, who had triumphed over the foe, blew their conchshells, delighting their friends and dismaying their enemies. When they heard that, the inhabitants of Indraprastha were happy, knowing that the King of Magadha was slain; and King Yudhishtira's long-cherished desire was fulfilled. Prostrating themselves before the King, Bhīma, Arjuna and Janārdana told him of all that they had done. When he heard of what Keśava had accomplished out of His abundant kindness, Dharmarāja let fall tears of joy ; his heart was so full with his love that no words would come (24-35).

CHAPTER LXXIV THE SLAYING OF SISUPĀLA

Sri Suka said : Having heard of the slaying of Jarā-sandha, King Yudhishtira, his mind full of the matchless glory of the Lord Krishna, spoke to Him thus in his joy. 'That Thou, the Lord of the lotus eyes, Whose command those that are the mentors¹ of the three worlds, as well as those worlds themselves and their Guardians, receive humbly with bowed heads, looking on it as a rare honour, dost execute the directions of us, miserable creatures, who flatter ourselves that we are the lords of creation, is irony indeed, O Lord of the limitless prowess. But of course the glory of the One without a second, of the Brahma, the Supreme Soul, is neither enhanced nor diminished by what He does, any more than the splendour of the sun is. The notion of difference, which makes the ignorant confound the body with the Self and talk in terms of 'me' and 'mine', 'thee' and 'thine' is not entertained even by Thy devotees, O Mādhava That art ever invincible' (1-5).

Sri Suka said : Having said this, the son of Prthā invited, with the approval of Krishna, at the proper season for the sacrifice, proficient Brahmanas, well versed in the Vedas, to officiate as priests—Dvaipāyana, Bharadwāja, Gautama, Sumantu, Asita, Vasishta, Chyavana, Kaṇva, Maitreya, Kavasha, Trita, Visvāmitra, Vāmadeva, Sumati, Jaimini, Kratu, Paila, Parāśara, Garga, Vaiśampāyana, and also Atharvā, Kāśyapa, Dhaumya, Rama, scion of the Bhrgus, Āsuri, Vitihotra, Madhucchandasa, Virasena and Akrtavraṇa. There came other invitees also, Droṇa, Bhishma, Kṛpa and the rest, Dhṛtarāshtra with his sons, and the exceedingly sagacious Vidura, as well as many Brahmanas, Kshattriyas, Vaiśyas and Sudras, who were eager to see the sacrifice. All the kings came, and so did their chief notables, O King. The Brahmanas, having explored the sacrificial site with golden ploughs, consecrated the King for the rite in the enjoined manner. The utensils employed in the sacrifice were of gold, as in the sacrifice offered by Varuṇa of

¹ 'Mentors' : such as Sanaka and other Brahmarshis ;
'Guardians' : Indra and the rest. (S.)

yore. Indra and the other Guardians of the worlds came with Brahmā and Siva, the hosts of the gods, the Siddhas and Gandharvas, the Vidyādhara and great Uragas, the sages, the Yakshas and Rākshasas, the birds of the air, the Kinnaras and Chāraṇas; and so did the kings and their queens, who had been invited to attend the sacrifice offered by the King, the son of Pāndu. And they were not surprised that everything should be perfect in a sacrifice that the devotee of Krishna was offering. The priests, godlike in their effulgence, conducted the Rājasūya sacrifice for the great King according to the rules, even as the gods had conducted the sacrifice offered by Prachetas. On the day of the extraction of the *soma* juice, the King honoured fittingly, with his mind under control, the high-souled priests and the chief men in the assembly (6-17).

When the members of the assembly came to consider who among them should be accorded the first honours, they could not reach a unanimous decision. Then Sahadeva said, 'Surely Achyuta, the exalted Lord to whom the saintly look up, should be accorded the first honours. For He is all the gods, as well as time, place, wealth, and so on. The world, and the sacrifices, the sacred fires, the oblations made therein, and the incantations uttered—all these are of His substance. It is He that is the Goal of the Way of Knowledge and the Way of Devotion. For He is the One without a second, and the universe has Him for its Self. He, the Birthless, relying wholly on Himself, and of His own volition, creates, maintains and destroys all this, O members of the assembly. It is by His grace that men, exerting themselves along many lines of action, secure the desired fruits thereof, Dharma and the rest. Therefore let the first honours be accorded to Krishna, the supremely great; by doing that we shall be honouring ourselves as well as all creation. He who desires that his gift should come back to him a hundredfold should offer it to Krishna, the Soul in all beings, to Whom nought is alien, Who is ever at peace with Himself, and Who knows no lack' (18-24).

Sahadeva, who knew Krishna's greatness, fell silent, having said this. Hearing what he said, the most worthy

of men applauded, saying, 'Well said !' When he heard what the Brahmanas said, and saw that it was what the assembly had very much at heart, the delighted King honoured Hrishikeśa, his heart overwhelmed by love. Washing His feet, he joyfully sprinkled on his head that water which purifies all the worlds, and so did his wife, brothers, his ministers and other members of his family. As he presented Him with yellow silks and priceless jewels, he could not look at him because of his tear-filled eyes. When they saw Him thus honoured, all the people saluted Him with joined palms, exclaiming, 'Salutations ! Victory !' and there fell showers of flowers (25-29).

Having heard all that was said, the son of Damaghosha (Śiśupāla) sprang up from his seat, angered beyond bearing by the extolling of Krishna's virtues ; imperiously flinging up his arm, he said harsh things of the Lord in the assembly, unafraid. 'There seems to be truth in the saying that time is all-powerful and irresistible, since even wise men's minds are seduced by childish counsel. You, O chiefs of the assembly, are supreme judges of merit, you should not give your approval to the foolish suggestion that Krishna should be chosen for the supreme honour. How can you disregard the claims of the chiefs of the assembly, men who are steadfast in austerities, in the pursuit of knowledge and the observance of vows, who have been rid of their sins by their enlightenment, who are in the forefront of sages established in the Brahma, and are worshipped by the Guardians of the worlds, and bestow honours on this cowherd, who has disgraced his line, and who has no more right to them than the crow to the sacrificial offering ? How does he deserve to be honoured—he who has fallen from *varṇa*, *āśrama* and the family, and rendered himself unfit for every Dharma, who lives as he pleases and is devoid of every virtue ? You know that their line was cursed by Yayāti and ostracised by the good, that it is inveterately addicted to drink, without occasion or excuse ; how does he deserve honour ? Abandoning the regions inhabited by Brahmarshis, they have ensconced themselves in the fastness of the sea, which is totally devoid of Brāhmic lustre, and from there these robbers harry the people' (30-37).

Such were the vicious words he spoke, having taken leave of his good fortune, but the Lord said no word in reply, taking no more notice of them than the lion of the howling of jackals. The members of the assembly, when they heard that intolerable abuse directed against the Lord, walked out, clapping their hands over their ears and cursing the King of Chedi in their wrath. He who does not instantly quit the place where evil is spoken of the Lord or of His people, will himself fall into the deepest hell, forfeiting the merit of his good deeds. Thereupon the enraged sons of Pāndu, and the Matsyas, Kekeyas and Sṛñjayas, sprang up with upraised weapons to kill Sīsupāla. The King of Chedi, unruffled, snatched sword and shield, to overawe those of the kings who sided with Krishna, O scion of the Bharatas. That very moment the exalted Lord got on His feet; and staying His own people, He in His anger cut off the head of the advancing foe with the razor-sharp discus. When Sīsupāla was slain, there was a great uproar; the kings, his followers, took to their heels to save their lives. The column of light that issued from the body of the King of Chedi entered Vāsudeva as all the world looked, like a burning meteor from the sky falling on earth. Because his mind, obsessed by an enmity that had been sustained through three lives, had incessantly dwelt on Him, he became assimilated to His essence. One's birth is determined by what absorbs one's thoughts (38-46).

Yudhishtira, now emperor of all the world, gave ample fees to the priests and the members of the assembly, and when he had duly honoured all, took the lustral bath. Having enabled the King to accomplish the sacrifice, Krishna, Lord of the master-yogis, tarried there for some months, importuned by His dear friends. Then, taking leave of the reluctant King, the Supreme Lord, the son of Devaki, went home to His city with His spouses and ministers. And now I have related at length, as you desired, the tale of how those natives of Vaikuntha has come to sojourn on earth again and again because of the Brahmanas' curse. Having taken the bath that concluded the Rājasūya sacrifice, King Yudhishtira shone in the midst of that assembly of Brahmanas and Kshattriyas like the Lord of the gods himself.

Honoured by the King, the gods, the Brahmanas and the denizens of the upper air returned happily to their abodes praising the sacrifice and Krishna—all of them, that is, except the evil Duryodhana, Kali incarnate, who afflicted the Kurus like a mortal disease; he could not bear to see the splendid opulence of the son of Pāndu. He who recites this account of Vishnu's deeds, including the story of the slaying of the King of Chedi, and the deliverance of the kings, and of the great sacrifice, will be freed from all sin (47-54).

CHAPTER LXXV

DURYODHANA HUMILIATED

The King asked, 'You have said, O Brahman, that all the men and the gods, the kings, the sages and the celestials who attended the great Rājasūya festival and saw Ajātasatru's triumph rejoiced, with the single exception of Duryodhana. Tell us the reason why he did not, O blessed One' (1-2).

The sage replied: 'In the Rājasūya sacrifice offered by your high-souled grandfather, all relations engaged in some service or other, out of their affection for him. Bhīma was superintendent of the kitchen, Duryodhana was treasurer, and Sahadeva was in charge of the reception of the guests. Nakula looked after the commissariat, Arjuna attended to the comforts of respected elders; Krishna washed the feet of guests; the daughter of Drupada served food, and the great-hearted Karṇa dispensed gifts. Yuyudhāna (Sātyaki) and Vikarṇa, Hārdikya, Vidura, Bāhlika's sons, Bhūriśravas and the rest, and Santardana and others, were all of them similarly occupied. Entrusted with different tasks, they went about their work, intent on pleasing the King. When the priests, the members of the assembly, the masters of many lores, the friends and well-wishers had all been gratified by the sincere words of thanks, by the bestowal of presents, and the payment of fees, and the King of Chedi had merged in the feet of the Lord of the Sātvatas, they took the lustral bath in the Gangā, which concluded the sacrifice. *Mṛdanga* and conch-shell, *paṇava* and kettle-drum, big drum and *go-mukha*,

and many other curious instruments were played at the bathing festival. Dancers danced joyously, the singers sang in chorus and the clamour of *vīṇā* and flute and cymbals¹ mounted to the skies. With the sacrificer leading, the chiefs of the Yadus, Śrījayas, Kāmbhojas, Kurus, Kekayas and Kosalas, adorned with garlands of gold, passed in procession, attended by mighty tuskers, chariots and horses carrying beautiful banners and buntings and infantrymen gorgeously attired, the earth shaking under the tread of their armies. The members of the assembly, the priests and the great Brahmanas issued forth chanting the Vedas aloud; the celestial sages, the manes and the Gandharvas sang panegyrics and showered flowers. Men and women, scented and wearing beautiful chaplets, ornaments and fine raiment, diverted themselves with smearing and sprinkling each other with various coloured liquids. The courtesans, smeared by the men with paste of saffron mixed with scented water, oil, ghee and turmeric, delightedly did the same to them. The King's spouses, protected by guards, also rode in splendid vehicles, like the goddesses who were assembled in the sky, riding in the finest aerial cars, to see the ceremony. Sprinkled by their cousins and friends from all sides, they beamed, their faces wreathed in bashful smiles. And they drenched their brothers-in-law and their companions with squirts. Their wet clothes revealing the outline of their bodies, breasts, thighs and waists, the flowers slipping down from their braids, having come loose in the excitement, they enjoyed themselves in these pleasant diversions, producing a great commotion in dirty minds (3-17).

The emperor, mounted on his chariot drawn by splendid horses with gold collars, shone in the company of his spouses like the King of Sacrifices incarnate, attended by the ancillary rituals. Having conducted him through the rites connected with the *patnī-samyāja*² and the ceremonies for atonement and purification, the priests made him take his lustral bath in the Gangā, after *āchamana*, in the company of Krishnā. The celes-

¹ 'talonnāda': (*alt.*) 'beating time with hand-claps' (Apte). ² The four *ājya* (ghee) oblations offered to Soma, Tvashtri, the wives of the gods, and Agni.

tial kettle-drums sounded along with the kettle-drums played by men, and the gods and the sages, manes and men let fall showers of flowers. Thereafter all men who were within the pale of *varṇa* and *āśrama* took that bath, which instantly frees from sin even him who has committed the most heinous of sins. Then the King, donning new silks and adorning himself, presented the guests, the members of the assembly, the Brahmanas and others with jewels, raiment, and so on. The King, who put his trust in Narayana, signally honoured relations, kinsmen, kings, allies, well-wishers, and others. The men were all as splendid as the gods, with their jewelled ear-rings and wreaths, turbans, coats, fine apparel and garlands of great price; and the women, with their beautiful faces adorned by the ear-pendants and multitudinous curls, and with gold girdles on their waists, were charming (18-24).

Then the priests, the great householders, the members of the assembly, the Vedic scholars, the Brahmanas, Kshattriyas, Vaiśyas and Sūdras, and the kings who had come, the gods, the divine sages, the manes and elementals, the Guardians of the worlds with their attendants—all, duly honoured, returned to their abodes, O King, taking leave of him. They could not praise enough the splendour of the great Rājasūya sacrifice of the royal sage, the servant of Hari, even as a mortal drinking nectar could never feel he had had enough. King Yudhishtira lovingly detained his well-wishers, connections and relations as well as Krishna, being loath to part from them. And to please him the Lord stayed on there, my friend, after sending away the Yadu chiefs, with Sāmba and the rest, to Kuśasthali. The King Yudhishtira, having thus voyaged with Krishna's aid across the vast and formidable ocean of desire that had possessed him, was at peace with himself (25-30).

Duryodhana, as he gazed at the opulence of the King's palace and thought of the fame that the Rājasūya had brought him, whose mind dwelt in Achyuta, was consumed with envy. One day he saw the daughter of the King of Drupada attending upon her spouses in the inner apartments with their luxurious appointments, where were assembled, by the skill of the artificer-of-

the-world (Maya), all the specific glories of the kings of men, of the chiefs of the gods and of the chiefs of the Asuras. Hankering after these¹ things added to the misery of the King of the Kurus. And there the numerous consorts of the Lord of the City of the Madhus shone then in all their splendour, as they, with their slim waists, moved about slowly, by reason of the weight of their hips, on lovely tinkling feet, their pearl necklaces shining red with the saffron on their breasts, their gracious faces adorned by the dangling ear-pendants and the abundant tresses (31-33).

It so happened that the emperor Dharmaputra was seated, like Maghavā himself, on his golden throne in the hall fashioned by Maya, in the company of his younger brothers and relations, and of Krishna Who was his eyes, as it were, with all the pomp of empire about him, and the bards singing his praises. Just then the haughty Duryodhana, accompanied by his brothers, entered the hall, sword in hand, crowned and garlanded, storming and raging at the domestics. Taken in by Maya's wizardry, he gathered up in his hand the end of his nether garment when stepping on dry ground, imagining that it was water; and elsewhere he fell into the water, mistaking it for dry ground. On seeing that, Bhīma laughed aloud, and so did the women and the other kings present, being encouraged by Krishna, though the King tried to stop them. Thus put to shame, he walked out without saying a word, in a blaze of anger, hanging down his head, and departed to Gajāhvaya. The good men cried out in dismay and Ajātasātru was unhappy. But the Lord Who, intent as He was on ridding the earth of its burden, had by a mere look caused Duryodhana to fumble and flounder, was silent. And now I have answered your question, O King, regarding Duryodhana's depravity that showed itself in the great Rājasūya sacrifice (34-40).

¹ R. takes 'yasyām' to refer to Draupadi; the meaning would then be 'in his infatuation for her'.

CHAPTER LXXVI

SĀLVA ATTACKS KRISHNA'S CAPITAL

Srī Suka said : Now you shall hear, O King, of another marvellous exploit of Krishna, Who had taken a human form in play—how He slew the master of the magic aerial car. Sālva, Sisupāla's friend, who came to Rukmiṇī's wedding and was defeated by the Yadus in battle, as were Jarāsandha and others, swore then in the hearing of all the Kings, 'I will rid the earth of the Yādavas, you shall see my prowess'. Taking this solemn vow, the stupid man worshipped the All-powerful Lord, the God Paśupati, subsisting on a handful of dust eaten once a day. At the end of a year, the Consort of Umā, Who is easily propitiated, asked Sālva, who had besought His grace, to name the boon he wanted. He prayed for a vehicle that would go anywhere, would be invulnerable to the attacks of gods, Asuras, mortals, Gandharvas, Uragas and Rākshasas, and would strike terror into the hearts of the Vṛshṇis. Granting his prayer, Girīśa gave orders to Maya, who knew how the cities of the foe may be conquered. He built a city of iron, called Soubha, and gave it to Sālva. Having got a vehicle which could go anywhere and which was the abode of darkness and unapproachable, Sālva went to Dvāravātī, his feud with the Vṛshṇis rankling in his breast. Besieging the city with a huge army, he laid waste the woods on the outskirts, and ravaged the pleasure-gardens all around it, the gates with their *gopuras*, the great many-storied mansions and the walls enclosing them, and the recreation grounds, O foremost of the Bharatas. From that formidable aerial car fell showers of weapons, rocks, trees, thunderbolts, serpents and hailstorms. There rose a furious whirlwind, and all the quarters were blotted out by dust. Thus harried by the Soubha, as the earth had been ravaged by the Asura Tripura, Krishna's city was distraught and unhappy, O King (1-12).

The Lord Pradyumna, that hero of great renown, seeing his subjects thus harassed, reassured them, saying, 'Do not be afraid,' as he got into his chariot. Sātyaki, Chārudeśha, Sāmba, Akrūra and his younger brother,

Hārdikya, Bānuvinda, Gada, Sāraṇa and other mighty bowmen, leaders of the serried phalanx of fighting charioteers, sallied forth clad in mail, supported by chariots, elephants, horses and infantry. Then began the tumultuous and terrible fight of Sālva and his forces with the Yadus, which was like the battle between the gods and the Asuras. Rukmiṇī's son destroyed in a trice, with his celestial weapons, the delusive phantoms produced by the sorceries of the master of the Soubha, as the sun dispels the darkness of night. He struck the commander of Sālva's forces with twenty-five arrows, gold-shafted, iron-tipped and with sunk-in joints. He struck Sālva himself with a hundred of them, while his men got one each, his drivers ten and his mounts three. Seeing that tremendous exploit of the mighty Pradyumna, all men on both sides, his own and the enemy's, applauded. That magic creation of Maya's, which seemed now one, now many, which was visible one moment and disappeared the next, baffled the enemy. It was never at rest, whirling round and round like a firebrand, down on the earth one moment, up in the air the next, now on the top of a mountain, and in the water the next instant. Wherever they caught a glimpse of Sālva with his army in the Soubha, there the Chiefs of the Sātvata forces aimed their weapons. Sālva was bewildered, finding his city and forces fiercely assailed by the enemy's arrows, whose touch was like that of sun and fire¹, and deadly as the virulent viper's; while the valiant Vṛshnis, though sore pressed by the flood of arrows loosed by the commanders of Sālva's army, stood their ground, resolved to conquer both worlds (13-25).

A minister of Sālva's, named Dyumān, a strong man, who had been severely assailed by Pradyumna, struck him with his iron mace, letting off a war-shoop! When he saw Pradyumna severely injured on the breast by the mace, the driver, Dāruka's son, knowing his duty, drove with him, the subduer of the foe, away from the battle-field. On recovering consciousness a short while later, the son of Krishna reproached his driver, saying 'Alas, what a disgrace for me, to flee from the

¹ They fell on all the army at the same moment like the rays of the sun, and they burnt like fire. (S.)

field of battle, driver ! Of all the Yadu clan no one has ever been known to have dropped out of a battle but me, on whom discredit has been brought by a cowardly driver. Having run away from the fight, with what face can I defend myself when I meet my fathers Rama and Keśava ? My sisters-in-law will of a certainty laugh at me as they ask me, ' How did you, O heroic one, come to exhibit such weakness before the enemy on the battle-field ? Come, tell us, do ! ' (26-31).

The driver answered, ' I did this, my Lord—may you live long—knowing my duty. When the charioteer is in straits, the driver should come to his rescue, as the charioteer should guard him in the like case. Because I knew this, I took you away from the field of battle, seeing that you were in distress, having been struck with the mace by the enemy and left unconscious ' (32-33).

CHAPTER LXXVII

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SOUBHA

Srī Suka said : Refreshing himself with water and donning armour again, he armed himself with the bow and told the driver, ' Take me where the warrior Dyumān is to be found.' Repulsing Dyumān, who was playing havoc with his army, Rukmiṇī's son, with a faint smile, let fly eight sharp shafts at him, killing his four horses with four of them and the driver with another, severing his bow and cutting down his standard with one apiece, and with the last cutting off his head. Gada, Sātyaki, Sāmba and others inflicted heavy losses on the army of the master of the Soubha ; and all that were in the Soubha fell into the sea, their necks severed. That tumultuous and fierce battle, in which the Yadus and the followers of Sālva thus battered each other, went on for twenty-seven days (1-5).

Krishna, Who had gone to Indraprastha on the invitation of Dharmaputra, returned to Dvāravātī, after the completion of the Rājasūya sacrifice and the slaying of Siśupāla. Seeing baleful portents, He had taken leave of the Kuru elders and the sages as well as Prthā and her sons. He told Himself, ' I have come here along with my revered elder brother. The Kshattriyas,

who are partisans of the King of Chedi, might attack my city'. When He saw His own people being slaughtered, and found the Soubha and King Sālva there, Keśava arranged for the defence of the city, and told Dārūka, 'Driver, quickly drive me to the place where Sālva is. You must not panic. The master of the Soubha is a sorcerer.' Thus forewarned, Dārūka got into the chariot and drove swiftly; and everybody, both his own people and the enemy, saw the younger brother¹ of Aruṇa enter the battle-field (6-11).

When Sālva, whose army had been practically wiped out, saw Krishna, he hurled at His driver a lance that made a frightful din. As it came rushing along the sky with a terrific noise, lighting up the quarters like a great meteor, Sauri shivered it with His arrows into a hundred fragments. Hitting him with sixteen shafts, He discharged a massive fusillade at the Soubha, which was darting hither and thither in the air, like the sun assailing the sky with its rays. But Sālva pierced the right arm of Sauri, the Wielder of the Sārnga, which held that bow, and the Sārnga fell from His hand—a marvel indeed! There went up a great cry of dismay from all creatures who saw this, and the master of the Soubha stridently shouted at Janārdana, 'Since you, O fool, carried off the affianced bride of your brother and our friend before our very eyes, and killed him, who was off his guard, in the assembly hall, I shall this day dispatch you with my sharp arrows, if you dare take your stand before me, to a place from which there is no returning, conceited though you are with the notion that you have never known defeat at another's hands' (12-18).

The Lord retorted, 'You prate vainly, you dolt; you do not see death standing at your elbow. Valiant men display their prowess, they do not harangue'. Saying this, the Lord, greatly nettled, struck Sālva on the collar-bone with His mace; it descended on him with a terrific speed, and he reeled, vomiting blood. When the mace returned to Krishna, Sālva had vanished. A little later there came a man to Achyuta; he made Him a low bow, saying that he had been sent by Devaki,

¹ i.e., they saw Krishna's flag on which was drawn the likeness of Garuḍa (the younger brother of Aruṇa).

and he wept as he gave Him her message : ' Krishna, O Krishna of the mighty arm, who love your father, Sālva has bound and carried off your father as the butcher does sheep '. On hearing this shocking news, Krishna so far succumbed to human failings as to be overpowered by dejection, and from the intensity of His affection the Compassionate One exclaimed, like any common man, ' How could this contemptible Sālva take away my father, defeating the vigilant Bala, whom the very gods and Asuras find invincible ? Strong indeed is fate ! ' As Govinda was saying this, the master of the Soubha returned, bringing with him one who looked like Vasudeva, and he said to Krishna, ' This is the father that begot you and for whose sake you live in this world. I shall kill him before your very eyes ; save him if you can, you fool. ' With that threat, the sorcerer cut off the head of Anakadundubhi with his sword, and taking it with him entered the Soubha stationed in the sky (19-27).

He (Krishna), though possessed of innate and indefeasible knowledge, was for a while overcome by feelings natural to a man, because of His attachment to His own. Then the mighty One realized that it was a magic trick of the Asuras, taught by Maya, which Sālva had employed. And Achyuta saw on the battle-field neither the messenger nor his father's body, even as the dreamer when awake sees no more the world of his dreams. Noticing His foe moving about in the sky in his Soubha, Achyuta resolved to destroy him. So say certain sages, O royal sage, speaking inconsistently ; they apparently do not remember what they have themselves said¹. For that contradicts this. How far indeed are grief and delusion, attachment and craven fear, which are natural to the ignorant, from Him, Who is One and Integral, with His unfragmented self-knowledge, omniscience and power ! How can the Supreme, the Goal of the saintly, be deluded, when by devotion to His feet

¹ Śuka, having given the story so far, as it had been related by others, points out now the fallacies in it. The contradiction is between Ch. CXXI. 13 and verse 8 in the present Chapter ; according to the former Balarāma did not go to Indraprastha at all, while in the latter Krishna says that He had accompanied Him. (S.)

these obtain that plenary knowledge of the Self whereby they get rid of the erroneous notion of It that has existed from eternity and realize the truth of the Self as well as achieving the ultimate majesty? (28-32).

As Sālva was powerfully bombarding Him with a multitude of arrows, Sauri of the unfailing valour clove his armour with his arrows, cut his bow and severed the jewel from his crest, and with His mace shattered the enemy's Soubba. Shivered to smithereens by the mace directed by Krishna's hand, it fell on the water. Abandoning it, Sālva came down to the earth, and raising his mace rushed at Achyuta. As he came on, the latter severed with a *bhalla* the arm that held the mace; and arming Himself for the slaying of Sālva with the marvellous discus, which looked like the sun at the dissolution of the universe, He shone like the mountain of the rising sun, with the sun on its summit. With it Hari cut off the head of the great sorcerer with its ear-pendants and the crown on it, as the King of the gods cut off Vṛttra's head with the thunderbolt. And there went up a great shout from the multitude. When the evil-doer was killed and the Soubha destroyed by the mace, kettle-drums sounded in the sky, played by the assembled gods, O King. Then Dantavakra wrathfully sallied forth to avenge his friends (33-37).

CHAPTER LXXVIII

THE SLAYING OF DANTAVAKTRA

Sri Suka said: Discharging the duty that one owes to an absent friend, in regard to Siśupāla, Sālva, Poundraka and others who had gone to the other world, that wicked man (Dantavakra) with his huge bulk was seen advancing in a rage, O King, all alone and on foot, armed with the mace and shaking the earth under his tread. When He saw him coming, Krishna quickly jumped down from the chariot, mace in hand, and barred his way, as the shore stops the ocean. Raising his mace aloft, the King of Karūsha said to Mukunda in his arrogance, 'Ah! how lucky that you should have come under my notice today. You, Krishna, are our uncle's son. You have killed my friend, and you would

kill me too ; so I will slay you, fool, with this mace which falls like the thunderbolt. Killing one who, being a relation, is yet a foe, like a disease lodged in one's own body, I shall be discharging my debt to the friends I have loved' (1-6).

Thus provoking Krishna by his wounding words, as the elephant is prodded by the goad, he struck Him on the head with the mace and roared like a lion. Though struck with the mace on the battle-field, the first of the Yadus was not shaken. And Krishna in His turn struck him with the heavy Kaumodiki on the chest. His heart split by the mace, he vomited blood and fell down dead, his hair dishevelled, his arms and feet sprawling on the ground. Thereupon, marvellous to relate, an exceedingly fine light¹, emanating from that body, entered Krishna as all the world looked, as had happened at the death of the King of Chedi, O King. His brother Vidūratha, deluged by grief for his brother, sprang forward with a snort, armed with sword and buckler, to kill Him. As he came on, Krishna cut off with His sharp-edged discus his head, with the crown and ear-pendants (7-12).

When He had thus destroyed the Soubba and slain Sālva, Dantavakra and his brother, whom none else could withstand, He was extolled by gods and men, by the sages, the Siddhas and the Gandharvas, the Vidyādharas and the great serpents, the Apsarases, the companies of the manes, the Yakshas, Kinnaras and Chāraṇas. As they sang His victory and showered Him with flowers, He entered the decorated city surrounded by the Vṛshṇi chiefs. He, Krishna, the exalted Lord, the master-yogi, the Overlord of the universe, Who thus triumphs, is still regarded by the dull-witted as having suffered defeat as well as winning victories (13-16).

When He heard of the Kurus' preparations for war with the Pāṇdavas, Rama, who did not wish to take sides, left on what was ostensibly a pilgrimage, as you know. Bathing at Prabhāsa, He made offerings to the gods, the sages, and the manes and gifts to men. Then He went up the stream of the Sarasvatī, accompanied by the Brahmanas. He visited the Pṛthūdaka, the Bindu-

¹ Too subtle for mortal eyes.

saras, the well of Trita, the Sudarśana, the Viśāla, the Brahmātīrtha, the Chakratīrthā, and the Sarasvatī on its eastern course, as well as the holy places on the Yamunā and the Gangā, O scion of the Bharatas, and reached Naimiśa where the sages were engaged in the long Sattra sacrifice. Knowing His greatness, the sages engaged in the sacrifice welcomed Him befittingly, rising up and prostrating themselves before Him, and according Him all honours. Accepting them, He took his seat, along with His retinue. And then He noticed Romaharshaṇa, the pupil of the great sage, who had remained seated. When He saw that the man, who was of the Sūta class, had not got up to receive Him, nor had he deferentially joined his palms in salutation, and that he occupied a seat higher than those of the Brahmanas, Mādhava was outraged. 'Since this low-born blockhead dares to occupy a seat higher than those of the Brahmanas, as well as that which we, the guardians of Dharma, occupy, he deserves death. Though he has been a disciple of the blessed sage and studied the Dharmaśāstras in their entirety along with the epics and the Purāṇas, they have had no more influence on his conduct than an actor's roles on him who plays them, because being under the flattering delusion that he is learned, he is undisciplined and immodest, and is totally lacking in self-control. I have come into this world precisely for the purpose of chastising pretenders to holiness, who are the worst of sinners.' Saying this, the exalted Lord slew him with the sharp point of a blade of *kuśa* grass that He picked up, because destiny had so decreed, though He had recoiled from the prospect of killing even evil men (17-28).

'Alas ! alas !' cried the sages in distress, and they told the Lord Sankarshaṇa, 'You have done wrong, O Lord. We had given him the Brahmana's¹ seat, O Scion of the Yadus, and granted him length of days and freedom from fatigue for the duration of this sacrifice. Though you have unwittingly done this "slaying of a

¹ Though not a Brahmana, he had been invested with that status by them for the duration, because the rule is that the Purāṇas should be expounded by a Brahmana. And a Brahmana, while engaged in such exposition, is not to get up in honour of anybody, however exalted.

Brahmana", and though the Vedic rule is not binding on you, the Lord of Yoga, an act of expiation for Brahmana-murder, done by you of your own free will, O Sanctifier of the worlds, will be conducive to the world's welfare'. The Lord said, 'I shall atone for the killing, in order to promote the world's weal. You may lay upon Me the penance for it prescribed under the most rigorous rule. Tell me, besides, whatever you would wish for him—life, strength, the functioning of all the faculties with vigour—and he shall have it by the exercise of my *yogic* powers' (29-34).

The sages replied, 'Be pleased to order matters so, O Rama, that the power of your weapon and of death, as well as your prowess and our words shall be vindicated'. The Lord answered: "One is reborn in one's son", says the Veda. Therefore this man's son shall expound the Purāṇas to you, and he shall enjoy length of life, strength, and the fullest possession of his faculties. Tell me, great sages, what else you would wish done, and I shall do it. Consider too, O wise ones, what would be the just punishment for my unwitting act.' The sages told Him, 'The horrid *Aśura* Balvala, son of Ilvala, comes here at every new phase of the moon and pollutes our Sattrā sacrifice. Kill, O Dāsārha, that wicked creature, who bespatters us with pus, blood, ordure, urine, liquor and flesh; that would be the best service you can do us. Then make a circuit, going from left to right, of Bhāratavarsha, as a pilgrim for a twelve-month, practising the prescribed austerities, and bathing in the sacred waters, with your mind under control, and you will be purified' (35-40).

CHAPTER LXXIX

BALARĀMA SLAYS BALVALA

Sri Suka said: At the advent of the full moon, there rose a high wind accompanied by a dust-storm, and the air was charged with the smell of pus. A shower of ordure caused by Balvala fell on the sacrificial grounds, and he himself appeared on the scene armed with the spear. On seeing him, who with his huge body resembled a mound of pounded antimony, whose hair and beard

were like molten copper, and whose face, with its fierce tusks was fixed in a frown, Rama bethought Him of His pestle, which rends the foe, and His plough, which puts down the Asuras; and forthwith they presented themselves before Him. Dragging down with the tip of His plough the foe of the Brahmana who was moving in the sky, Bala in a great wrath knocked him on the head with the pestle. Wailing in his distress, he fell down on the ground like a mountain struck by the thunderbolt, his forehead cloven, his body red with the blood that poured from his wounds. The sages extolled Rama, and pronouncing on Him their blessings which never go in vain, gave Him the purificatory bath as the gods had done to the slayer of Vṛttra. And they made presents to Rama of the Vaijayanti garland with its unfading lotuses, which are the home of Śrī, and also celestial raiment and ornaments (1-8).

Given leave by them to depart, Rama went to the Kauśiki accompanied by the Brahmanas, and bathed in it; then He went to that most sacred of lakes from which flows the Sarayū. Going along the course of the Sarayū and reaching Prayāga, He bathed and worshipped the gods and others there, and proceeded to the hermitage of Pulaha. He bathed in the Gomatī, the Gandakī, the Vipāśā and the Sōna. He went on to Gaya, where He propitiated the manes. He bathed at the confluence of the Gangā and the ocean. He saw Rama on the Mahendra mountain and made His obeisance to him. He bathed in the Godavari, where it runs divided into seven streams, then in the Krishnavenī, the Pampā lake and the Bhimarathī. Rama had *darshan* of Skanda and went to Srisaila, the abode of Girīśa. The Lord, after visiting in the Drāvida country the exceedingly holy Venkatādri, went to the shrine of Kāmākshi, and then to the sacred city of Kānchi.¹ He proceeded to the Kaveri, most sacred of rivers, and to the Holy of Holies, Srīrangam, where Hari is ever present. After visiting Rishabhādri sacred to Hari, and the Mathurā of the South, He reached the dam² laid on the ocean,

¹ V. renders *Kāmakoshnī* as 'Kāmākshi, celebrated as Śiva-Kanchi'; (though Monier-Williams says it is the name of a river). By Kanchi he means apparently Vishnu-Kanchi. ² At Rameswaram,

which gives absolution from the most heinous of sins. There the Wielder of the Plough gifted ten thousand cows to the Brahmanas. He then bathed in the Kṛta-mālā and the Tāmraparṇi and visited the Malaya mountain, one of the seven principal mountains, and prostrated Himself before Āgasthya, who lives there, and was blessed by him. Taking leave of him, he went to the Southern Sea, and beheld the goddess Durgā, named Kanyā there. Going on to Phalgunam¹ where Vishnu is ever present, he bathed in the sacred lake Panchāp-saras, and He gifted ten thousand cows. Then making the round of the Kerala country and the Trigartas, He visited Gokarṇa sacred to Siva, where Dhūrjati is eternally present. After seeing Āryā of the Island, Bala went to Sūrpāraka. Bathing in the Tāpi, the Payoshni and the Nirvindhya, He entered the Dandakas and came to the city of Māhishmati on the Revā. After bathing in the Manutīrtha, He came to Prabhāsa again (9-21).

Hearing from the Brahmanas of the destruction of all the Kshattriyas in the war between the Kurus and the Pāndavas, He felt that thus the burden of the earth had been lifted. To stop Bhīma and Duryodhana, who were fighting with maces on the battle-field, the Scion of the Yadus went to Kurukshetra. On seeing Him, Yudhishtira, the twins, Krishna and Arjuna prostrated themselves silently before Him, wondering, 'What could He have come here to say?' Seeing that the two, armed with maces, were in a state of great excitement, each determined on winning and both engaged with intense absorption in intricate wheeling movements of offence and defence, He said to them, 'You, O King, and you Vṛkodara, are both valiant men and possessed of equal fighting power. I think one is superior in strength, the other has had the better training. One cannot see either of you, who are thus equally matched, winning or going down before the other; so stop this unprofitable fight.' But they would not listen to those reasonable words, O King, because of their inveterate enmity; each brooding on the insults and injuries he had suffered at the other's hands. Deciding that it

¹ Anantaśayana (the modern Trivandrum), which S. calls 'Anantapuram'.

must be left to fate, Rama went to Dvāravati. Ugrasena and others were pleased to see Him back among them. When He was come again to Naimiśa, the sages gladly conducted all sacrifices for Him, who was Himself Sacrifice incarnate, and had now renounced all strife. And to them the Omnipresent Lord granted that illumination of spirit by which men perceive the Ātman as the Ground of the universe and as pervading it through and through. Taking with His Consort the lustral bath that concludes the sacrifice, He put on sumptuous clothes and ornaments and, with His kinsmen, relations and connections about Him, shone like the moon by His own effulgence. Numberless were the exploits like these that Bala the Strong, the Incomparable Ananta, performed in the guise of man. He who meditates morning and evening on the doings of Rama of the marvellous deeds will be dear to Vishnu, the Waneless (22-34).

CHAPTER LXXX

THE STORY OF KUCHELA

The King said: 'I am eager to hear, O blessed one, of other exploits of Mukunda, the Almighty Lord of the limitless puissance. Who that is weary of the quest of pleasure, and knows wherein lies the supreme good, can keep away from the haunting tales of the Illustrious Lord, having once had a taste of them? That alone is speech which proclaims His praises, those alone are hands that do His work; that is truly mind which remembers Him Who dwells in the stationary and the moving. The ear that hears His sanctifying story, the head that bows low before His twin forms¹, the eyes that see them as His tabernacle, the limbs that delight to bathe in the water that has washed the feet of Vishnu and His devotees—these alone are truly what they seem' (I-4).

The Sūta said: Hearing that prayer of Vishnurāta, the blessed sage, the son of Bādarāyaṇa, spoke, his heart plunged in the exalted Lord Vāsudeva. Śrī Suka said: Krishna had a friend, a Brahmana, who was foremost

¹ The sentient and the non-sentient (S.)

among those who knew the Vedic teaching. He was indifferent to worldly pleasures and was at peace with himself, having established conquest over the senses. He lived the householder's life on what chance brought. His faithful wife, clad like him in rags, and lean with hunger, said to her lord, approaching him with fear and trembling, her face haggard with poverty, her heart grieving within her, 'Has not the blessed one a friend in the Consort of the Goddess of Plenty, O Brahman, the exalted Lord Who is the Chief of the Sātvatas, the Friend of the Brahmana and the Haven of Refuge? Go to Him, who is the support of the good, blessed one. He will give abundantly to you, a man with a family languishing in want. He is in Dvāravatī now, ruling the destinies of the Bhojas, Vṛshnis and Andhakas. To those who just remember His lotus feet, He gives even Himself; what doubt, then, that He, the Father of the worlds, will bestow on those that are devoted to Him wealth and whatever else men wish for, though these are not the things to be supremely desired?' (5-11).

Thus gently besought by his wife many a time, he reflected, 'What greater gain could there be than to behold the Lord in His Glory?' and he made up his mind to go. 'Is there any little thing in the house that I could take as a present, O auspicious one? If there is, let me have it.' She begged four handfuls of parched grain, tied it up in a rag and gave it to her husband to take as a present. And with that he, the foremost of Brahmanas, went to Dvārakā, wondering, 'How shall I manage to see Krishna?' (12-15).

Passing three armed camps and crossing three enclosures along with other Brahmanas, he came to the abodes of the unapproachable Andhakas and Vṛshnis to whom Achyuta was the Law. He entered one of the opulent homes of Hari's sixteen thousand spouses; and it was as if he was come into the Bliss of Brahma. Seeing him from afar, Achyuta, Who was seated on His beloved's couch, sprang up to meet him and embraced him joyfully. Made supremely happy by that touch of the body of the Brahmana sage, the comrade who was dear to Him, the Lord of the lotus eyes let His tears fall. Seating him on the couch, He himself made the

gifts of honour to His friend ; and bathing his feet, the exalted Lord, Who sanctifies the worlds, sprinkled that water on His own head, O King. He anointed him with sandal paste of a divine fragrance, ground with aloes and saffron. Worshipping His friend by burning incense before him, and waving lights arranged in rows, He made the ceremonial offer of *pan* and a cow, and bade him welcome. And the great dame¹ herself waved the fly-whisk over that Brahmana clad in tatters, covered with dirt, emaciated, with the veins standing out all over his body (16-23).

Seeing him, with his begrimed body, lovingly honoured by Krishna of the immaculate glory, the women of the household were astonished. 'What did this dirt-covered pauper and mendicant, derided by the world, the lowest of the low, do to merit such honour at the hands of the Mentor of the three worlds with whom the Goddess Sṛī abides ! He embraced him as if he were His own elder brother, leaving the side of the Goddess of Prosperity, who had been seated with Him on the couch' (24-26).

Clasping each other by the hand, they recalled with delight incidents of past days when they were both living as pupils with their preceptor, O King. The Lord asked, 'When you had left our teacher's home after finishing your studies and paying the teacher's fee, did you, O Brahman who know Dharma, take to yourself a wife worthy of you, or did you not ? If you did, I am sure that, leading the householder's life, you would not have allowed your mind to be disturbed by desires, for you never cared much for this world's goods, O wise one. Some, though untouched by desire, perform their ordained duties to be rid of the instincts of the natural man, which are induced by the Lord's Power of Māyā, even as I do my work to draw the world together (27-30).

'Do you recall the days when we lived in the household of the Guru, from whom the twice-born obtain the knowledge of That² which must be known, and thus transcend the darkness of Nescience ? He to whom a

¹ Rukmiṇī, who though not mentioned by name is regarded as the Queen to whose house the Lord's will had guided Kuchela. ² The knowledge of the Brahma. (S.)

man owes his birth in this world is his first Guru, to whom his reverence is due. He to whom he owes his rebirth¹ and the competence it brings for the performance of ordained duties, is his second Guru, to be revered even as I, the Supreme Lord, should be. Then he who imparts to men in any of the four stages of life the knowledge that enlightens, is none other than Myself², my friend. Those men indeed know their supreme interest, who, born to the duties of *varṇa* and *āśrama*, effortlessly traverse the ocean of transmigratory existence by listening to the word of the Guru, who is Me. Though I am the Self in all things, I am not as easily pleased by the performance of sacrifices, by the birth into a new life, the practice of austerities, or renunciation, as by service to the Guru (31-34).

‘Do you recollect, O Brahman, an incident that befell us once, in the days of our life with our Guru, when we were asked by his womenfolk to fetch firewood? When we had got into the great forest, there was a heavy downpour out of season, accompanied by high winds and the crash of thunder. The sun had set, and all the quarters were enveloped in darkness. Heights and depths could not be distinguished, all being under water. Endlessly buffeted by the fierce wind and torrential rain, we could not make out the directions in that forest, which was one vast waste of waters, and disconsolately we wandered hither and thither, holding each other by the hand. Coming to know of this, our Guru and preceptor Sāndipani came at sunrise in search of us, his pupils, and he saw our distress. “Alas, my children, you have been put to immense suffering on our account, disregarding, in your devotion to me, the body, which is infinitely dear to every creature. Such sincere dedication to the Guru of the body, which is the means to all good, is indeed the requital that worthy disciples should make to him. I am immensely pleased with you, O best of the twice-born; may all your wishes be fulfilled, and the Vedas retain for you their potency undiminished here and hereafter.” You no doubt remem-

¹ i.e., the man who does for him the sacrament of *upanayana*.

² The Guru is merely the vehicle the Lord uses for imparting the supreme knowledge, and so should be treated as none other than He.

ber many such episodes of our days with our Guru. It is only by the blessings of the Guru that a man fulfils himself, attaining the peace that passes understanding' (35-43).

The Brahmana replied, 'What indeed did we not achieve, O God of gods, O Mentor of the worlds, we who lived with Thee, Whose wishes always come true, in the household of the Guru? But for Thee, O Lord, Whose Form is the Brahma known as the Veda, the fountain of all felicity, to live under the tutelage of a Guru was but an act of ironic deference to the ways of the world' (44-45).

CHAPTER LXXXI

THE LORD EXALTS HIS COMRADE

Sri Suka said: Thus happily conversing with that best of Brahmanas, Krishna, the exalted Lord Hari, Who knows the minds of all creatures, looked lovingly at him as He, the Refuge of the good and the Friend of Brahmanas, asked with a quizzing smile the Brahmana, who was dear to Him, 'What is the present you have brought me from home, O Brahman? Even a particle given by those who are devoted to Me is, in My eyes, abundance by reason of their love. I get no satisfaction, however great the gift, if it is made by the unloving. A leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, any thing that a man may offer Me with devotion, that I accept because it is a devout soul's gift prompted by love' (1-4).

Though he was told thus, the Brahmana was ashamed to offer the Consort of the Goddess of Plenty a handful of that parched grain. So he did not, but sat with bowed head. He Who sees straight into the hearts of all creatures knew why he had come. He reflected, 'In the past he never sought Me out for the sake of wealth. But now My friend has come to Me, wishing to please his faithful wife. I shall bestow upon him such abundance as the gods themselves could hardly hope for.' Thus resolved, He snatched from the Brahmana's upper garment the parched grain tied in a rag, exclaiming as He did so, 'Ah, what have we here! Why, you have brought Me what I love above all things, My friend.

This parched grain, my good soul, gives Me, the Soul of the universe, the deepest satisfaction.' Saying this, He put a handful into His mouth and reached out for another. But before He could take it, the Goddess Sri, who is ever devoted to Him, the All-Highest, caught His hand : 'That is enough, O Soul of the universe, to make Thee pleased, and to secure for a man all the opulence he could desire in this world or the next' (5-11).

The Brahmana, having eaten and drunk and spent the night in Achyuta's mansion, was as happy as one who had come to heaven. The next morning, receiving the respectful salutations of the Creator of the universe, Who is ever filled with the Bliss of the Self, he went home, my son, accompanied part of the way by Him, Who saw him off and gladdened him with His heart-warming words. He had got nothing from Krishna, and he had not asked for anything. He went home, abashed¹ but happy to have been vouchsafed a glimpse of the Almighty Lord. 'Ah ! what happiness, to have seen the love for the Brahmana of the God Who is their Friend ! I, the poorest of the poor, received the embrace of Him Who holds the Goddess of prosperity on His bosom. What a far cry from me, a pauper, the lowliest of the low, to Krishna, the Home of the Goddess of Plenty ! And yet, just because I was a Brahmana born, He threw His arms about me and hugged me. He seated me, as brothers are seated, on the couch used by His spouse. Seeing me tired, His queen fanned me with the fly-whisk. And He, the God of gods, looking upon the Brahmana as His God, attended upon me Himself, rendering such service as massaging the feet, and worshipped me as if I were a god. It is the worship offered at His feet that brings heaven and release, all the opulence to be found on earth, in heaven and in the nether regions, and all the supernatural attributes. "A poor man, he might, oncoming into wealth, become proud and forget Me : " so He must have reflected, as in His compassion He refrained from giving me even a trifle' (12-20).

Thus communing with himself, he approached his own home. He found it surrounded on all sides by

¹ At having entertained thoughts of asking for help.

many-storied edifices which shone with the lustre of the sun and the moon, or glowed like fire, and by beautiful groves and gardens alive with the chatter of flocks of birds, and dotted with pools where *kumuda* and *kalhāra*, lotus and lily bloomed; and in those mansions were well-adorned men, and women with eyes like does. 'What is this? Whose place is this? How did it come to be like this?' As he thus debated within himself, men and women, who looked divinely splendid, came forward to welcome the blessed one with all honours, to the swelling strains of music and song. Hearing that her husband was come, his wife, deliriously happy, instantly issued forth from the house in all eagerness, looking like Śrī incarnate. The faithful spouse, her eyes filling with the tears of love and longing on seeing her lord, closed them, as she mentally made her prostrations to him and embraced him in her heart. And he was amazed at the sight of his wife, who shone like a goddess in her aerial car, surrounded by serving maids adorned with gold necklaces. With happiness in his heart, he entered with his wife his own home which, with its hundred crystal pillars, looked like the mansion of the great Indra (21-28).

As he took in the abounding opulence within—beds white as the froth on milk, ivory couches with gold fittings, fans and fly-whisks with gold handles, seats of gold, luxuriously cushioned, brilliant canopies hung with ropes of pearl, gems worn by jewels among women, which shone like lamps against walls of pure crystal, or walls adorned with emerald, the Brahmana reflected soberly on this sudden good fortune that had come to him. 'What else but the glance of the foremost of the Yadus, the supremely opulent, falling on me, could have brought all this abundance to one like me, ill-starred and chronically poor? Assuredly my comrade, the great Chief of the Dāsārhas, who has the enjoyment of all that the heart could desire, showers plenty on the petitioner without telling him, looking on his gift even as the rain-cloud does. He makes light of what He gives, plenitude though it be, while He exaggerates the trifling service of a devoted friend. So the Mighty One joyfully took of His own accord a handful

of that parched grain that I had brought. May it be given to me again and again, in life after life, to love Him, and be His friend, to be solicitous for His interest, to aid Him and serve Him, and by virtue of deep attachment to the Blessed One, the Home of all the virtues, to be brought into close union with His devotees. The exalted Lord, Who knows no birth, wisely refrains from bestowing great riches, power, or the possessions that contribute to happiness, on His devotees, lest they should be impediments to enlightenment, for He sees how the rich fall by their pride.' Having arrived at this conclusion by the exercise of discrimination he, with his intense devotion to Janārdana, enjoyed with his wife the pleasures of life without undue attachment, inclined to wean himself gradually from them (29-38).

To Him, the God of gods, to Hari, the Lord of the Sacrifice, the Brahmanas are as God, they have His homage; He holds nothing higher. And that Brahmana, the comrade of the exalted Lord, having seen the Invincible yield Himself into the hands of His humble servants, sundered the knot of the heart by the intensity of his meditation on Him, and attained before long His abode, the Goal of the good. The man who hears this tale that brings out the attachment to the Brahmana of the Lord Who exalts the Brahmana, falls in love with Him and is freed from the bondage of *karma* (39-41).

CHAPTER LXXXII

KRISHNA MEETS THE GOPIS

Srī Suka said: Once¹, when Rama and Krishna were in Dvāravātī, there was a total and prolonged eclipse of the sun like that which occurs when a Kalpa ends. Knowing that it was coming, men from all parts, inspired by the desire to acquire religious merit, went, O King, to the holy Syamantā-panchaka where Rama, the first of bowmen, ridding the earth of Kshattriyas, had collected the blood of kings in great pools, and where He, the exalted and all-powerful Lord, had offered sacrifices, for the expiation of sin like any other man, though

¹ The incidents in this chapter must have occurred before the Rājāsūya and after Rama's visit to Vraja. (*Toshanī*.)

Himself untouched by *karma*, in order to set the world an example. On that great pilgrimage came the inhabitants of all Bhārata. And to that holy place went the Vṛshṇis too, Akrūra, Vasudeva, Āhuka (Ugrasena) and others, to offer expiation for their sins, O scion of the Bharatas; so did Gada, Pradyumna, Sāmba and others. Aniruddha, and Kṛtavarmā, the Commander-in-Chief, remained at Dvārakā along with Suchandra, Suka and Sāraṇa, to defend the city (1-7).

They, with their garlands of gold, and wreaths, raiment and coats of mail of a celestial splendour, shone like the sojourners in the air, as they went on their way, with their wives, attended by an army of chariots bright as the aerial mansions of the gods, and horses that leapt like waves, elephants that trumpeted like rumbling clouds, and infantrymen who looked like Vidyādhara in their lustre. Taking their bath and fasting, the fortunate ones, with their minds under control, made gifts to Brahmanas of milch cows adorned with scarves round their necks and garlands of gold. Bathing again in Rama's pools as enjoined, the Vṛshṇis give sumptuous food to worthy Brahmanas with the prayer, 'May we never be found wanting in devotion to Krishna'. Then, with their permission, the Vṛshṇis, who looked on Krishna as their God, had their food, and they disposed themselves at ease under trees that cast a cool shade. They found assembled there in their hundreds friends and relations who had come—ruling chiefs from Matsya, Uśinara, Kosala, Vidarbha, Kuru, Śrījaya, Kambhoja, Kekaya, Madra, Kunti, Ānarta and Kerala, besides others, both allies and enemies. They met, too, their well-wishers and friends, the Gopas, Nanda and the rest, and the Gopis who had long been yearning to see them. Their faces and hearts abloom like shining lotuses in the intense joy of seeing each other, the men were happy, locked in warm embrace, as the tears streamed from their eyes, their bodies thrilled, and words would not come. And the women, with loving glances from the smiling eyes, hugged each other, breast pressed against breast smeared with saffron paste, their eyes filling with tears of love. They prostrated themselves before elders, while those who were younger prostrated

themselves before them. Exchanging greetings and good wishes, they talked of Krishna (7-17).

Prthā, meeting her brothers, sisters, their sons, her own parents, the spouses of her brothers, and Mukunda, shed her woes in loving converse with them. Kuntī said: 'My noble brother, I look upon myself as singularly unfortunate, seeing that you, the best of men, never thought of me in my travails. Friends, kinsmen, sons, brothers, even fathers do not remember their own, to whom fate is unkind.' Vasudeva replied, 'You must not blame us, dear, poor mortals who are the playthings of destiny¹. For it is by the Lord's will that the world does what it does or what it is made to do. Harried by Kamsa, we were scattered in all directions, and only now have been restored to our place by Providence, sister' (18-22).

Srī Suka said: The kings, honoured by Vasudeva, Ugrasena and other Yadus, were blissfully content to have seen Achyuta. Bhishma, Drona, the son of Ambikā, Gāndhārī with her sons, the Pāndavas with their spouses, Kuntī, Śrñjaya, Vidura, Kṛpa, Kuntibhoja, Virāta, Bhishmaka, the great Nagnajit, Purujit, Drupada, Saibya and Dhristaketu, the King of Kāsi, Damaghosha, Viśālāksha, the Kings of Mithilā, Madra and Kekaya, Yudhāmanyu, Suśarmā, Bāhlika, and others, with their sons, and all the other kings who owed allegiance to Yudhishtira, were filled with admiring wonder, great King, when they set eyes on the glorious person of Sauri, in the company of His spouses. Entertained with all hospitality by Rama and Krishna, they heartily praised the Vṛshnis, Krishna's followers: 'O Lord of the Bhojas, you and your people have, of all mankind, achieved the supreme end of life, in that you have constantly before your eyes Krishna Whom even the yogis have rarely the good fortune to behold. For He Whose fame², proclaimed by the Veda, sanctifies the universe, as do the water that washes His feet and the Veda which is His Word; by the touch of Whose lotus feet the earth, though its magnificence had been ravaged by

¹ (alt.) (Īśa-kṛidana-kātarān) would mean, 'who are frightened of their lot as the playthings of the Lord.' ² (v. r.) (amīvam-alam) 'He to hear of whom frees one from all sin'.

time, has had its potency so fully renewed that it showers its abundance on us ; He, Vishnu, brought you, though you lived the worldly life, the cause of one's being caught up in *samsāra*¹, the supreme bliss that transcends heaven and liberation alike, because, being connected with Him by ties of blood and marriage, you could see Him, touch Him, walk with Him, talk with Him, lie down in His company, sit and eat with Him ' (23-31).

Srī Suka went on : Hearing that Krishna and the Yadus were there and desiring to see them, Nanda and the Gopas had come there with all their goods loaded on their carts. On seeing him, the Vṛshnis rose in a body in their joy, as the limbs revive when the life-breath returns, and embraced him warmly, greatly moved by this meeting after a long parting. Vasudeva, joyously embracing him, was overwhelmed by his affection, as he remembered the sorrows inflicted by Kamsa, and the placing of his sons in Gokulam. Krishna and Rama, embracing their parents, prostrated themselves before them, but uttered not a word, their throats choked by the tears of love, O best of the Kurus. Raising up their sons to their own seats, and embracing them, he (Nanda) and Yaśodā let their tears fall. Rohiṇī and Devakī, embracing the mistress of Vraja, and remembering the offices of friendship she had discharged, said in a voice thick with tears, ' Who can ever forget your loving kindness, O mistress of Vraja, which are yet unabated, and which could never be repaid even if one were to succeed to Indra's sovereignty ? These two, who had never seen their parents, were given into your keeping, and they lived with you as with parents, knowing no fear, and you, honoured dame, did what gave them delight and what was auspicious for them, fed them and dandled them, and protected them as the eyelashes do the eyes. The good make no discrimination between what is their own and what is not ' (32-39).

Srī Suka said : The Gopis too, finding themselves after a long time in the company of their Beloved, Krishna, looking at Whom they used to curse the Creator for giving eyelashes to the eyes, took Him into their hearts through the eyes, and embraced Him to their hearts' content,

¹ (*lit.*) 'the road to hell.'

attaining to that oneness with Him which was not easy to achieve even for the yogis established in *samādhi*. The exalted Lord, meeting them in that condition, in a secluded place, embraced them and enquired after their welfare. And then He said to them with a smile, 'Do you, dear friends, remember us, who had to go away to look after the interests of our people and have been detained for long, having had to give our whole minds to the wiping out of the enemy? Perhaps you despise us, fully convinced that we are ungrateful. But surely you must realize that it is the Lord that brings creatures together and separates them. Just as the wind collects a great body of clouds, or straw, or cotton, or dust, only to scatter them again, so deals the Creator with His creatures. Devotion to Me suffices to bring release to all beings. But you were singularly fortunate in that there grew in you that loving attachment to Me through which I am attained. You should know, my dears, that I am the beginning and the end of all creatures, and I am within them and without; even as all material things have their beginning and end in *ākāśa*, water, earth, air and fire and are permeated by them. All living beings have likewise their beginning and end in the gross elements; but the *Ātman* pervades them as the experiencer. You should learn to look upon both (the bodies and the experiencing souls) as appearances projected on Me, the all-pervading and indestructible Brahma' (40-47).

Srī Suka said: The Gopis, thus enlightened by Krishna on the essential truth of their being, gave themselves up to whole-hearted absorption in Him; and when their subtle bodies had been destroyed by such meditation, they attained Him. They prayed to Him, 'O Lord of the lotus navel, may Thy lotus feet, which are meet for constant meditation in the heart's core by yogis of unplumbed wisdom, and by cleaving to which those who have fallen into the pit of the transmigratory life can raise themselves up, be ever present before our minds, though we are caught up in the cares of the domestic life' (48-49).

CHAPTER LXXXIII

KRISHNA'S SPOUSES ON THEIR WEDDINGS

Sri Suka said : The exalted Lord, the Teacher and the Goal, having blessed the Gopis as they prayed, made kindly enquiries of Yudhishtira and others about their welfare. Thus affectionately asked by the Lord and treated by Him with every mark of consideration, they, whose sins had been destroyed by the sight of His lotus feet, answered with gladness in their hearts, ' How could aught of evil touch, O Lord, those who had at any time drunk their fill of that heavenly drink, the story of Thy lotus feet, as it flowed out of the hearts of the saintly through their mouths and entered by the ear, that drink which dispels one's ignorance¹ of his Creator ? Renouncing all attachment to the body, to house and home, we prostrate ourselves before Thee That art free from the three states of consciousness induced by the operations of the mind, and art ever bathed in bliss ; That art infinite and possessed of boundless knowledge ; That hast by means of Thy *yogic* power assumed a human form for the protection of the Vedas eclipsed by time, and art the Goal of the renouncers, who delight in the Self ' (1-4).

The sage said : While they thus praised Him, the Crest-jewel among illustrious men, the womenfolk of the Andhakas and the Kauravas, who had come together, talked of the glories of Govinda, which are sung by the three worlds. Listen, I will tell you what they said. Draupadī asked, ' O daughter of the King of Vidarbha, O Bhadrā, Jāmbavatī, you, daughter of the King of Kosala (Satyā), and you, Satyabhāmā, Kālindī, Saibyā (Mitravindā), Rohiṇī, Lakshmanā, as well as you others, spouses of Krishna, you must all tell us how Achyuta, the exalted Lord, married each of you, exercising His *yogic* power and conforming to the ways of the world ' (5-7).

Rukmiṇī answered, ' While the Kings were ready with their bows to bestow me on the King of Chedi, He took me away, leaving the dust of His feet to crown

¹ (*alt.*) which destroys the nescience to which one owes the body. (S.)

the heads of redoubtable warriors, like the lion taking his prey from a flock of sheep and goats. May it be given to me ever to worship the feet of Him who is the Abode of the Goddess Sri!' (8).

Satyabhāmā said : ' My father gave me away to the Lord, though I had been promised to another, because he was appalled by his offence in having aspersed Him in his grief for his murdered brother, when He, having fought and vanquished the King of the bears, to free himself from the false imputation, recovered the gem and gave it to him.' (9).

Jāmbavati said : ' My father, not knowing that He was none other than his Master and his God, the Consort of Sita, fought with Him for twenty-seven days ; and when he knew from this test Who He was, he clasped His feet and gave me as an offering to Him, along with the gem ; and I remain His slave ' (10).

Kālindī said : ' I am the serving maid who sweeps the house for Him, Who came with his friend, and wedded me, who had engaged in austerities from the desire to touch His feet ' (11).

Bhadrā said : ' May it be my lot, in birth after birth, to wash the feet of Him Who is the Home of the Goddess of Prosperity. He came to my "bride's choice," defeated the assembled kings, as well as my brothers, who would have hindered Him, and carried me off like the lion snatching its prey from a pack of hounds ' (12).

Satyā said : ' He quickly subdued and playfully tied up, as children do kids, the seven bulls possessed of extraordinary strength and mettle and exceptionally sharp horns, which humbled the pride of the most valiant, and which my father kept for testing the prowess of kings. Having thus won me, for whom the "bride-price" was valour, He took me with Him, followed by my serving-maids and an army with all its four divisions, inflicting defeat on the Kshattriyas on the way. May His service be ever my portion ! ' (13-14).

Mitravindā said : ' My father himself, O Krishnā, sent for his maternal uncle's son Krishna, and gave Him, to Whom I had pledged my heart, me with my companions and an army one *akshauhini* strong. May I be allowed, in birth after birth, the touch of His feet,

which would be the supreme good for me, tossed about by my own *karma*!' (16).

Lakshmaṇā said: 'Having repeatedly heard Achyuta's life and deeds extolled by Nārada, I too, O Queen, gave my heart to Mukunda; had not the Goddess who holds the lotus in Her hand chosen Him deliberately, rejecting the Guardians of the worlds? Knowing my fixed intention, my father Br̥hatsena, who loved his daughter, devised an expedient—the semblance of a fish, like the one set up at your *svayamvara*, O Queen, from the desire to gain Pārtha; but while that was covered on the outside, of this one, only its reflection in water could be seen. Hearing of it, kings skilled in the use of all kinds of weapons and missiles, came to my father's city in thousands from all parts, accompanied by their instructors. Duly honoured by my father according to their age and power, they, their minds wholly intent on me, picked up bow and arrow, to hit the target amidst the assembly. But some of them put them down again, being unable to string the bow; others bent the bow and drew the string up to their breast, only to be knocked down by the bow. Others, the Kings of Magadha, Ambashta and Chedi, Bhīma, Duryodhana and Karna, who were all powerful men, drew the bow, but could not locate the target. Pārtha saw the reflection of the fish in the water, and thus knew where it was, and strove to hit it with an arrow, but could not bring it down, he only grazed it. When the Kshattriyas, proud men humbled in their pride, had given up the attempt, the exalted Lord took the bow, playfully strung it, and fitting an arrow to it took one look at the reflection of the fish in the water and then severed it with the arrow and threw it down on the ground, when the sun was at the meridian. The kettle-drums sounded in the sky, as cries of "Victory!" rose on earth, and the gods, overcome with joy, let down showers of flowers. I then entered the jousting ground, smiling bashfully, the anklets on my feet tinkling sweetly, holding in my hand a necklace of gems set in burnished gold, and wearing a pair of new silks and a chaplet on my tresses. Raising my head with its abundant curls and the sheen of ear-pendants on the cheeks, and looking

at the Kings all around, with smiling glances, I, who loved Him with all my heart, slowly placed the garland on Murāri's neck. Forthwith the *mṛdangas*, *patahas* conch-shells, drums and kettle-drums struck up, the dancers started dancing and the singers singing (17-30).

'When I thus chose the Lord, O daughter of Yajna-sena, the great kings, tormented by their passion for me, could not in their jealousy put up with it. But He of the four arms had mounted me on His chariot drawn by those four jewels among horses, and donning coat of mail, He grasped the bow Sārnga, ready for the fray. Dārūka then sped the chariot with the gold trappings, and Hari moved off, ignoring the gaping Kings, as the lion might the lesser beasts. Some of the Kshattriyas stuck to Him in the rear; others, with uplifted bows, prepared to bar the way, as if dogs should obstruct the lion. Some of them fell in battle, their arms, feet and necks severed by the flood of arrows that fell from the Sārnga; while the rest gave up and ran away. Then, as the sun enters his own home, the Lord of the Yadus entered Kuśasthalī, which was brilliantly adorned, with its banners hoisted on flagstaffs obscuring the sun, and its splendid archways, while its praises were sung in heaven and on earth. My father suitably honoured his friends, connections and relations with the present of rich clothes and ornaments, and placed at their disposal couches, seats and attendants. And out of the depth of his devotion, he gave, to Him Who knows no lack, costly weapons, as well as serving maids and all kinds of valuable things, infantry, elephants, chariots and horses. All of us here, by eschewing all other attachments and remaining faithful to our *dharma*, came directly to serve as His house-serfs Him Whose delight is in the Self' (31-39).

The other queens said: 'Coming to know, after He had slain in battle the son of the earth and all his host, that we, the daughters of Kings whom he had vanquished in the course of his world conquest, were kept in confinement, He released us; and He in Whom all desires had been fulfilled, married us whose minds dwelt on His lotus feet, which vouchsafe freedom from the cycle of birth and death. We, gentle lady, do not

want the empire¹ of the world, the lordship of the celestial regions, the joys to be found in both, the possession of supernatural powers, the position of Brahmā, liberation, or translation to the Abode of Hari. We only yearn to bear on our heads the dust of the blessed feet of the Wielder of the Mace, rich with the saffron on the breasts of the Goddess of Grace, and to feel the touch of the feet of the Mighty Lord, for which, when He tended cows, the women of Vraja and the Pulinda women, the very grass and vegetation, and the cowherds had longed' (40-43).

CHAPTER LXXXIV

THE SAGES ON KRISHNA'S GREATNESS

Srī Suka said : When they heard them thus testify to the constancy of their love for Krishna, Who was none other than Hari, the Soul of the universe, all of them, Prthā, the daughter of Subala (Gāndhāri), the daughter of Yajnasena (Draupadī), Mādhavī (Subhadrā) and the consorts of Kings, as well as His own Gopis, marvelled, their eyes blurred by the welling tears. As they were thus talking among themselves, the men with the men, the women with the women, the sages came there to see Rama and Krishna ; Dvaipāyana and Nārada, Chyavana, Devala and Asita, Visvāmitra, Satānanda, Bharadwāja, and Gautama, the blessed Lord Rama with His disciples, Vasishtha, Gālava, Bhṛgu, Pulasthya, Kaśyapa, Atri, Mārkaṇḍeya and Br̥haspati, Dvita, Trita, and Ekata. There were, besides, the sons of Brahmā and Angiras, Agastya, Yājñavalkya, Vāmadeva and others. On seeing them, the kings and others who had been seated rose instantly, and so did the Pāṇḍavas, Krishna and Rama ; and they prostrated themselves before those whom all the world adored. And they all honoured them befittingly. Achyuta worshipped them, along with Rama, greeting them, placing seats for them and giving them water to wash the feet, and *arghya*, and offering garlands, incense and unguents. And when they were seated comfortably, the Lord, Who had taken a

¹ 'neither earthly empire nor sovereignty over the gods nor both together, nor again the powers of the Siddhas' (S's *alt.*).

body to safeguard Dharma, addressed them, while that great assembly listened in silence (1-8).

The Lord said, 'Ah ! we have not lived in vain ; we have this day achieved the supreme end of life, having set eyes on the lords of yoga ; that is a gain which is hardly within the reach of even the gods. How could we, with our meagre austerities and our identification of God with His image, have hoped to see with our own eyes, talk with, and worship with humble devotion the feet of such ? Do not the sacred waters, or the images of the gods made of earth or stone, purify, then ? They do undoubtedly, but it takes a long time ; whereas the mere sight of the good sanctifies. Neither fire nor sun, neither moon nor stars, nor earth, water, sky, air, speech, mind—none of these can remove the sins¹ of one who worships them, if² he harbours the notion of difference ; whereas enlightened souls dispel the ignorance of men who serve them though only for a brief while. He indeed is the donkey bearing loads of cattle-fodder, who identifies himself with this stinking body compounded of the three humours, and looks upon his wife and the like as belonging to him, and sees God in things made of earth, and regards water, not the enlightened, as the means of purification' (9-13).

Sri Suka said : When they heard those words of the Lord Krishna of the limitless wisdom, which were so uncharacteristic, the Brahmanas were perplexed and silent. The sages pondered long over the Lord's speaking as³ if He needed to be guided and controlled by others ; and concluding that His object was solely to win the minds of men to the performance of works, they answered Him, the Mentor of the worlds, with a smile, ' Inscrutable indeed are the ways of the exalted Lord, seeing that we, though we are reputed foremost among those who know the Truth, and we lay down the law for the great Patriarchs, are bewildered by Thy Power of Māyā, when Thou, hiding Thy true self behind human ways, actest as though Thou wert unfree. Himself wholly passive, He, the One Existent, brings about, by His mere

¹ Nescience, rather, which is the cause of sin. (S.) ² (alt.) 'since they promote the sense of difference'. ³ 'as if He considered Himself bound to perform *karma*, though He was above *karma*' (S.).

presence the creation, preservation and destruction of this multiplicity that is the universe, while remaining unbound by these activities, even as the earth acquires many a name and form in the things that are made of it. How wonderful that the Ever-perfect should thus act, as if He were playing a part ! And yet Thou dost, when the times require it, take a form of pure *sattva* for the protection of Thy own and the destruction of evil-doers, and in the spirit of play upholdest the eternal Vedic way ; for Thou, the Lord That transcends all, art the propagator of *varṇa* and *āśrama*. The immaculate Veda is the very heart of Thee, from which may be learnt, by one who practises austerities, studies the Vedas and exercises self-control, the truth about the unmanifest cause, the manifest effects, and Pure Being that transcends both. Thou honourest the Brahmana fold, O Brahma, because it is the repository of the Veda from which alone Thou mayest be known ; and that is why Thou art in the forefront of those that are devoted to the Brahmanas. This day we have gained the supreme object of life, the reward of knowledge and austerities and of the possession of eyes, by being with Thee, the Goal of the good, for Thou art the crown and summit of all blessings. Salutations to the exalted Lord Krishna of the limitless wisdom, the Supreme Spirit, Who hides the light of His own glory by His *yogic* powers ; to Him Whom these kings do not know, neither do the *Vrshnis*, though they have lived with Him and played with Him all their lives, because He, the *Ātman*, Who is Time¹ as well as the Inner Ruler, is hidden behind the screen of His own *Māyā*. Just as the dreamer, who imagines that what he sees is truth, identifies himself with the phenomenal form that the mind projects, forgetting his work-a-day self, which is different ; even thus, he whose mind is confounded by the delusive attraction of the objects of the senses, which are no more than names and forms, does not know Thee, because his power of discrimination has been blotted out. This day we have been granted the sight of Thy feet, whence flows the holy stream that washes off the spate of sins, those feet that even the perfected

¹ The cause of the coming into existence of the universe, and so on.

yogis can only contemplate in their hearts. Vouchsafe us Thy grace, imbuing our hearts with devotion to Thee. Only those whose uncontrollable love for Thee destroyed their separate selfhood¹ have ever found their way to Thee' (14-26).

Srī Suka said : With these words the sages took their leave of the Dāsārha, of Dhṛtarāshtra and Yūdhishthira, and were about to return to their hermitage, O royal sage ; perceiving which, Vasudeva of great renown approached them, and prostrating himself before them and clasping their feet, thus spoke with a collected and attentive mind. Vasudeva said : ' I offer my adorations to you in whom are all the gods. O sages, deign to listen to my request. Be pleased to explain how one should set about doing one's *karmas* so that *karma* might be destroyed' (27-29).

Nārada said : ' It is no matter for surprise, O Brahmanas, that Vasudeva, looking upon Krishna as his child, should in his eagerness for knowledge question us as to how he may attain the supreme good. For familiarity breeds contempt. Thus the man who lives on the Gangā leaves it to go to some other stream to purify himself. He, whose intuitive knowledge is never quenched by the passage of time, which brings about even the appearance and disappearance of the universe, or by any inherent cause or extraneous agency, or by the flux of the *guṇas* ; He, the Supreme Lord, the One without a second, Whose glory is never dimmed, is looked upon by the ignorant as a mortal whose self-knowledge is obscured by passions, activities and the fruits thereof, by the incessant flux of the *guṇas*, by the vital airs and all other such things of His own creation ; as if the sun should be supposed to be blotted out by cloud, mist, or the node' (30-33).

Thereupon, the sages addressed Anakadundubhi, O King, with the assembled Kings, as well as Achyuta and Rama, listening. They said, ' It has been determined that the annulling of one's past *karma* by ordained action is best done by worshipping with faith and zeal

¹ *āśaya*, the internal organ (*antahkaraṇa*) which attaches itself to the *jīva* and thus keeps it oblivious of its identity with the *Paramātmān*.

Vishnu, the Lord of the Sacrifice, through the offering of sacrifices. The seers have enabled us to see with the eye of Sāstra that this is an easy path to liberation ; it brings peace to the mind and fills it with joy. Besides it is an ordained duty. For the householder, among the twice-born classes, the way to ensure his own eternal welfare is to worship the Supreme Lord disinterestedly in this manner, utilizing untainted wealth obtained by legitimate means. The wise man, O noble one, should free himself from love of possessions by the offering of sacrifices and the giving of gifts, from attachment to wife and children by enjoying the pleasures of the domestic life, and from hankering after the joys of heaven by dwelling in his mind on their evanescence. Only those resolute men who had renounced all desires while living in society¹ went to the penitential woods. The twice-born comes into the world, O lordly one, burdened with three debts—to the gods, the sages and the manes. He who renounces, without discharging them by the offering of sacrifices, the study of the Vedas, and the begetting of progeny, respectively, will fall into hell. You are now quit of two of these debts—to the sages and the manes. Discharge your debt to the gods by offering sacrifices ; then, freed from all obligations, you may renounce. But you, O Vasudeva, have assuredly worshipped Hari, the Overlord of the worlds, with exceeding love ; for He was born as your son ' (34-41).

Sri Suka said : Hearing what they said, the great-hearted Vasudeva bowed his head to them in profound reverence, and propitiating them, requested the sages to conduct the sacrifice for him. Thus requested in the proper way, the *ṛshis* conducted for him in that sacred place many sacrifices according to the highest standards. When he had taken the vows, the *Vṛshnis*, attired becomingly after a bath, and adorned with lotus wreaths, and the kings, wearing ornaments, entered the sacrificial hall ; and so did Vasudeva's queens adorned with gold necklaces, fine raiment, and unguents, and happily carrying offerings in their hands. *Mṛdanga*, *pataha*, conch-shell, big drum, and kettle-drum boomed ; male and female dancers danced, and bards and minstrels

¹ (*lit.*) 'in the village'.

sang panegyrics. And the Gandharva women with their lovely voices joined in chorus with their husbands. His eyes painted with kohl and his body anointed with butter, he was consecrated by the priests, according to the rules, along with his eighteen spouses ; he looked like the royal moon with the stars. Consecrated and clad in deer-skin, he shone in the company of his spouses, who wore lovely clothes and were decked with bracelets, garlands, anklets and ear-pendants. His priests, swathed in shining silks, and the members of the assembly, formed a brilliant company, great King, like those who had conducted the sacrifice for the Slayer of Vṛtra. Rama and Krishna, Lords of Creation, shone in the company of their own relations, sons and spouses (42-50).

He propitiated the Lord Who rules the oblations, the incantations and the rites, by performing according to the rules many sacrifices, both principal and derivative¹, with all their ancillary rites such as the *agnihotra*. And at the proper time, he gave the priests, who were becomingly attired and adorned, the prescribed fees, cows, lands, young maids and great valuables. The great Brahmana sages, having made the offerings pertaining to the *patni-samyāja* and *avabhṛta* rites, bathed in Paraśurama's pool in the company of the sacrificer. After the lustral bath he gifted ornaments and clothes to the minstrels, and so did his queens. Then, suitably adorning himself, he devoutly offered food to all living creatures down to the dogs. And he gave presents and tokens of affection to his relations, their sons and wives, to the Kings of the Vidarbha, Kosala and Kuru countries, and of Kāśī, Kekaya and Śrñjaja, and he suitably honoured the members of the assembly and the priests of the sacrifice, as well as the hosts of gods and men, the manes, the elementals and the Chāraṇas. They departed, taking leave of Him who was the Abode of the Goddess Śrī, and praising the sacrifice. Dhṛtarāshtra, his younger brother, the sons of Pṛthā, Bhīshma, Droṇa, Pārtha, the twins, Nārada, the blessed sage Vyāsa,

¹ 'Prākṛta' are rites that are expressly prescribed ; 'Vaikṛta' are those that are derived by the Mīmāṃsakas by the rule of extended application.

their friends, connections and kin, embraced their relations, the Yadus, their hearts drenched with affection and filled with the sadness of parting, and returned to their countries; and so did others who had come (51-58).

But Nanda, whom Krishna, Rama, Ugrasena and others entertained with lavish hospitality, tarried there with the Gopas, as he loved his kin. Vasudeva, having smoothly voyaged across the great ocean of desire, spoke to Nanda lovingly in the midst of friends, taking him by the hand. Vasudeva said, 'Brother, it seems to me that the ties of affection, which bind men together and which are of God's own devising, are hard to sever even for the hero and the yogi; seeing that the matchless friendship you, O best of men, have given us, ingrates, does not abate in the least, even though unrequited. In the past, it is true, it was not in our power to do anything for your pleasure. But now, though we have you before our very eyes, they do not allow us to see you, blinded by prosperity as we are. May the splendour of sovereignty never be his, who would win the supreme good, for like a blind man he no longer sees his own kith and kin, O exalter of your friends' (59-64).

Srī Suka said: Breaking down under the stress of emotion, Ānakadundubhi wept, his eyes blinded by tears, remembering his many acts of loving-kindness. And Nanda, to please his friend, and because of his love for Govinda and Rama, stayed on for three months, putting off his departure from day to day at the loving insistence of the Yadus. Receiving in overflowing measure everything that a man could desire, he left along with the people from Vraja and his relations, taking with him the priceless ornaments, silks and valuable presents given them by Vasudeva, Krishna, Uddhava, Bala and others, and was seen off¹ by them. Unable to retrieve their hearts, which they had surrendered at the lotus feet of Govinda, Nanda, the Gopas and the Gopis departed to the Mathurā country. When their relations had left, the Vṛshnis, who looked upon Krishna as their God, returned to Dvāravātī, seeing that the rainy season was approaching. And they spoke in glowing

¹ 'Yāpitah', which S. renders as 'sent off, with a large army'.

terms to the people at home of the great festival held by the Chief of the Yadus on that pilgrimage, and the reunion with friends (65-71).

CHAPTER LXXXV

KRISHNA'S TEACHING TO HIS FATHER

Srī Suka said: Once, when his sons Sankarshaṇa and Achyuta came and prostrated themselves before him, Vasudeva greeted them affectionately and spoke to them. Having heard the words of the sages that were indicative of the greatness of his sons, and putting faith in them by reason of their many acts of prowess, he addressed them saying, 'Krishna, O Krishna, Master-yogi, and you, O Sankarshaṇa, Eternal One, I know that you are none other than the Overlords of Pradhāna and Purusha, the direct cause of the universe. All that is involved in the doing of an action—the locale, the subject and the instrument, the material and the efficient cause, the recipient of the result thereof, and the object—of all these not one is other than the Lord Himself, the Controller of Pradhāna and Purusha. Thou, O Adhokshaja, enterest Thy manifold creation, and functioning as *Prāṇa* and *Jīva*, the source of life and knowledge, sustainest it, Thyself knowing no birth. The powers of the *tattvas*, *Prāṇa*¹ (Sūtra or the Mahat) and the rest, which bring the universe into existence, really belong to Him Who is the First Cause, since they are wholly dependent on Him, and no two of them are alike, and their behaviour is unwilling. Thou art in truth the radiance in the moon, the splendour in fire, the effulgence in the sun, the twinkle in the star and the flash in the lightning, the immovability in the mountain, the stability and odour in the earth. And Thou, art too, O Lord, the waters, the savour in them, the satisfaction they give, and the power they have to sustain life. Thou art the energy, the mental power, the bodily strength, the physical activity and the capacity for movement that go with the vital airs, O Supreme Lord. Thou art the space occupied by the cardinal points as well as the intervals between

¹ 'Prāṇa' (vital air) is power of action, 'Jīva' is power of knowledge. (S.).

them, *ākāśa* and its support, and the subtle element of sound. Thou art the unmanifest sound, the *Pranava*, the sound that becomes audible, and the signifying word. Thou art the apprehension in the sense-organs, the gods that preside over them, and their power. Thou art the power of grasping in the intellect and the power of recollection in the *jīva*. Thou art the causes from which evolve the gross elements, the motor-organs and the sense-organs. Thou art the *Pradhāna* that involves the *jīva* in the transmigratory life. Thou art the imperishable essence behind the transient universe of phenomena, like the substance that remains when its modifications have been destroyed. The *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, and their evolutes are superimposed on Thee, the Supreme Brahma, by Thine own *yogic* power. Therefore these things do not really exist; they only appear to exist when they are projected on Thee, and Thou art implicit in them as Cause. At other times, Thou alone remainest, undifferentiated. The ignorant, who do not see Him Who is the Soul in all things, as the undifferentiated Reality behind the flux of *guṇas*, are, by reason of their lack of understanding, involved by their *karmas* in the transmigratory cycle (1-15).

‘Having providentially obtained that rare advantage, birth as a human being, with all faculties perfect, I have wasted my life, oblivious of my own true interest, thanks to Thy Power of *Māyā*, O supreme Lord. Thou dost bind all beings with the bonds of attachment, making them think of the body, “This is me,” and of those that are connected with the body, “These are mine”. You two are not our children but the Supreme Controllers of *Pradhāna* and *Purusha*, Who are incarnate for wiping out the *Kshattriyas* that burden the earth. Thou hast Thyself said as much. Therefore, O Friend of the distraught, I seek refuge in Thy lotus feet that free the afflicted from the terrors of the transmigratory life. I have had enough, more than enough of this hankering after the pleasures of the senses, which made me look upon this mortal body as the soul, and upon Thee, the All-Highest, as my son. Didst Thou not Thyself say, in the lying-in-chamber, that Thou That knowest no birth hadst been incarnate as our son in different births

to safeguard the Dharmas of Thy own ordaining? Thou assumest and discardest many a body, being sky-like¹ in this. Who can hope to understand, O Much-praised One, that Māyā of Thine, the All-pervading, that manifests itself as Thy glorious attributes?' (16-20).

Srī Suka said: Hearing those words of His father, the exalted Lord, the foremost of the Sātvatas, spoke gently with a smile, His head bowed in reverence. The Lord said: 'Father, we receive these words of yours as instruction, since you have given out the whole body of truths by applying them to us, your sons. Myself, you two, my revered elder brother here, the residents of Dvārakā, all the world of the stationary and the moving, in fact, should be regarded in just that light, O best of the Yadus. For the Ātman, Which is One, Self-luminous, Eternal, Undifferentiated, and free from all qualities, is seen as multifarious in the bodies fashioned by the *guṇas*, which are of Its own creation; appearing in and disappearing from them, and seeming, according to the limiting adjuncts with which It appears, as big or small, one or many, even as *ākāśa*, air, fire, water and earth do' (21-25).

Srī Suka said: O King, Vasudeva, hearing the truth expounded by the Lord, was freed from the notion of multiplicity and fell silent, being happy. At that time, O best of the Kurus, Devaki, in whom were all the gods and who, having learnt with wonder that her sons had recovered their Guru's son for him, remembered with wistful longing her children who had been slain by Kamsa, said to Krishna and Rama, as her eyes filled with the tears of sorrow, 'Rama, O Rama of the measureless puissance, O Krishna, Lord of the master-yogis, I know that you are the Paramount Lords of the universe, the first Cause, incarnate as my sons for the destruction of the kings, who have transgressed the Law in all their days, being destitute of goodness thanks to the Time-Spirit, and are thus a burden to the earth. O Primordial Lord, I take refuge in Thee, of Whom a fraction of a fraction of a fraction

¹ The comparison to the sky is in respect of remaining unattached.

causes the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe. You brought back from the world of the manes, when your Guru asked you to do so, his son, long dead, that being the preceptor's fee you paid him. Likewise, do my wish, O Lords of the Master-yogis. I want to see my children, whom the Lord of the Bhojas slew, brought back to me' (26-33).

The sage said : Thus besought by their mother, O son of the Bharatas, Rama and Krishna entered the nether (Sutala)¹ region, using their *yogic* powers. As soon as they entered it, the King of the Daityas (Bali) saw them, the God Who was the Soul of the universe and the object of all his adoration. And at the sight of them, he got up instantly, happiness flooding his heart, and prostrated himself before them with all his following. Joyously he offered them seats of honour, and when they were seated, washed the feet of the Mighty Ones, and he and all his followers sprinkled on their heads the water that had washed those feet ; that water which purifies all the universe, including Brahmā Himself. He honoured them with all his magnificence, offering them costly raiment, jewels and unguents, tendering *pan*, waving lights, and serving nectar-sweet delicacies, and surrendering into their hands everything he possessed, his family, his wealth and his very self. Indrasena (Bali), taking the lotus feet of the Lord in his hands and repeatedly placing them on his head, spoke in faltering words, O King, his heart overflowing with love, his eyes blurred by tears of joy, the hair on his body standing on end. Bali said : ' Salutations to Ananta, the Omnipresent, salutations to Krishna, the Dispenser of the destinies of the universe, the Promulgator of Sāṅkhya and Yoga, Brahma and Supreme Spirit. Though it is practically impossible for most beings to set eyes on you two, to some it may come easily, it seems, for you have, by reason of our good fortune, appeared to us, who are by nature restless and ignorant. We, the Asuras and Dānavas, the Siddhas, Vidyādhars and Chāraṇas, the Yakshas and Rākshasas, the ghouls, the hobgoblins, the spirits that contrive obstacles, and others of the same disposition, entertain inveterate enmity to

¹ See Bk. VIII Ch. 22.

Thee Whose form is compact of pure *sattva* and Who art known only through the Śāstra. Some have, by reason of the absorption that determined hostility brings, and others by the devotion that comes from passionate love, achieved closer unity with Thee than those that are possessed of pure goodness, gods though they be. Even the Lords of yoga hardly know aught of the mystery that is Thy *yogic* power, O Lord of the master-yogis ; how then should we ? Deign to bestow Thy grace on me, that I may get out of the empty well that is the domestic life, since Thy lotus feet are the only true home even for those who know no lack, and lead the solitary life with peace in my heart, under those universal benefactors, the trees, living on what chance may bring, or join the company of those who befriend all creatures. Control and direct us so, O All-Powerful Lord of all creatures, that we may be freed from sin ; for the man who obeys Thy commandments with faith and zeal is no longer subject to rule and prohibition' (34-46).

The Lord told him, 'Marīchi in the first Manvantara had six sons of his wife Ūrṇā. Those gods, when they saw Brahmā making overtures to his daughter,¹ laughed at him. For that transgression they had to take birth instantly as Asuras, and they were born as the sons of Hiranyakaśipu. Taken thence by Yogamāyā and placed in Devaki's womb, they were killed on birth by Kamsa, O King. She mourns them, looking upon them as her sons. They are here with you. We shall take them with us to assuage our mother's grief. Thereafter they shall, being freed from the curse, go back to the celestial world, unburdened by grief. Smara,² Udgīta, Parishvanga, Patanga, Kshudrabhrt, Hriṇī, all the six shall by My grace attain liberation' (47-51).

Having said this, they, duly honoured by Indrasena, took the children with them, and returning to Dvārakā gave them to their mother. On seeing the children, the good dame, her breasts flowing with milk from her love for them, embraced them, took them on her lap and kissed them again and again on the crown of their heads. Bathed in bliss by the touch of the children,

¹ See Bk. III Ch. 12 (28-32). ² 'Smara', the first-born of Devaki, was known as Kīrtimān.

she joyfully gave them the breast, succumbing to the deluding power of Vishnu's Māyā which keeps creation going. Having drunk of that nectar-like milk, the remnant of what the Wielder of the Mace had drunk, they, who were put in mind of their true status by the contact with the person of Narayana, prostrated themselves before Govinda, Devaki, their father, and Bala, and went to the worlds of the gods, as all men looked. When the lady Devaki saw the return of the dead and their going away again, she was amazed, and she concluded that it was all Krishna's Māyā, O King. Numberless are the marvellous exploits of Krishna, the Supreme Soul of the infinite puissance, O son of the Bharatas (52-58).

The Sūta said : He who listens to, or recites this tale of Murāri, of the immortal glory, as expounded by the blessed son of Vyāsa, the tale which completely wipes off the sins of the worlds, and delights the ears of His devotees like a lovely jewel, will rest his mind in the Lord and reach His Abode where is eternal peace (59).

CHAPTER LXXXVI

ARJUNA WEDS SUBHADRĀ : THE TALE OF TWO DEVOTEES

The King said : ' I should like to hear, O Brahman, how Vijaya married the sister of Rama and Krishna, who was my grandmother '(1).

Srī Suka said : The Lord Arjuna, going on a pilgrimage from place to place, heard at Prabhāsa about his uncle's daughter—how Rama, but not others, wished to give her in marriage to Duryodhana ; and as he longed to wed her, he disguised himself as an ascetic of the *tridandi* order and went to Dvārakā. There he spent the rainy months, intent on gaining his end, and enjoying continuous hospitality at the hands of the citizens and of the unsuspecting Rama. As an invited guest, he was once taken by Bala to his house, where he ate food that was served him with all devoutness. There he saw a stately maiden who seemed made to ravish the hearts of heroes. His eyes opened wide with delight, and his heart, tumultuous with desire, coveted her. On seeing him, who won the hearts of women, she too desired

him ; smiling with bashful side-long glances, she fixed on him her eyes and her heart. Thinking of her all the time and looking out for an opportunity, Arjuna's mind was in a whirl, beset by an overpowering passion, and nothing else would content him. When she came out of the citadel riding in her chariot, during a great temple festival, he, the super-charioteer, who had the consent of her parents and of Krishna, carried her off as the lion does its prey, disregarding the cries of her people ; fighting seated in his chariot, armed with the bow, he put to flight the valiant guards who beset him on every side. When he heard of that, Rama was in a tumult of rage, like the ocean when the moon is at the full. But his anger subsided when Krishna clasped His feet and His friends pacified Him. And Bala was glad to send as presents to the bride and bridegroom costly furniture, elephants, horses, chariots and men and women attendants (2-12).

Sri Suka went on to relate another episode. Krishna had a devotee, a worthy Brahmana known as Srutadeva, who found every satisfaction in the undivided loyalty and devotion he gave Him ; he was happy and serene, wise and untouched by sensuality. He lived at Mithilā in the Videha country as a householder, maintaining himself and discharging his duties on such gains or came to him unsought. Every day providentially brought him just what was needed for that day, not more ; content with that, he lived a well-ordered life. At that time the country was ruled by Bahulāśva of the House of Mithilā, a man totally free from egotism and pride. And both were dear to Achyuta. Pleased with them, the Lord went of His own accord to the Videhas, riding in His chariot driven by Dārūka, and accompanied by Nārada, Vāmadeva, Atri, Krishna (Vyāsa), Rama (Paraśurāma), Asita, Āruṇi, myself (Suka), Brhaspati, Kaṇva, Maitreya, Chyavana and other sages. Everywhere townsmen and the people of the countryside waited upon Him with *arghya* offerings, O King, as men do when the sun¹ rises with the planets about it. The

¹ 'He did not receive from each person the offering he brought, but by a mere look He accepted them all, as the sun does' (V). The sages are compared to the planets.

men and women of the Ānarta, Dhanva, Kuru-Jāngala, Kanka, Matsya, Pāñchāla, Kunti, Madhu, Kekaya, Kosala, and Ārṇa regions and many others drank in with their eyes His lotus face with its ready smile and friendly glance, O King. Freeing them from fear of *samsāra* by bestowing the knowledge of Reality on those from whose eyes the scales fell when they looked on Him, O King, and hearing men and gods sing His fame, which lit up the ends of the earth and swept away all sins, the Lord and Master of the three worlds went leisurely on His way and reached the Videha region (13-21).

Hearing that Achyuta was come, the people of the city and of the countryside gladly came forth, bringing presents, to receive Him, O King. When they saw the illustrious Lord, they, their faces and hearts abloom with joy, clasped their hands over their heads and bowed in reverence to Him and to the sages, who were well known to them by report. The King of Mithilā and Srutadeva fell at the feet of the Lord, each thinking that the Master of the worlds had come to bestow His blessings on him. And with joined palms both the Ruler of Mithilā and Srutadeva simultaneously invited the Dāsārha and the Brahmanas to be their guests (22-25).

The Lord, accepting, went to the houses of both, keeping that fact from them,¹ since He wished to please them both. When those whose glory is beyond the reach of the ears of the evil-minded, had come into his house and were seated comfortably on the seats of honour placed for them, the high-minded Janaka, his heart swelling with the joy of loving devotion, his eyes turbid with tears, prostrated himself before them; and he bathed their feet and sprinkled on his head that water which sanctifies the world, and so did the members of his family. And he worshipped the Lord and the company of His peers with scents, flowers, raiment and ornaments, with incense and the waving of lights and the ceremonial proffer of cows. And when they had fed, he spoke softly, pleasing them with his sweet words,

¹ S. suggests an alt. rendering (favoured by some other commentators), which assumes that He took two different forms, and it is implied that the *rishis* must have done the same.

while he lovingly pressed the feet of Vishnu, taking them on his lap. The King said, 'Thou, O Lord, art the Soul in all creatures, the Self-luminous Witness ; and now Thou hast shown Thyself to us, who meditate on Thy lotus feet. Thou hast presented Thyself before our eyes to make good Thy word, "Neither Ananta nor the Goddess of Plenty nor Aja is dearer to Me than he who gives his exclusive devotion to Me". Who that knows this will keep away from these lotus feet of Thine, That givest even Thyself to the sages who have abjured all possessions and have stilled the mind ; Who, incarnate in the House of Yadu, hast spread Thy glory which destroys the sins of the three worlds, among men who are caught in the cycle of birth and death, so that their travails may end ? Salutations to Thee, the exalted Lord Krishna of the limitless knowledge, to the Sage Narayana established in blissful contemplation. Be pleased to tarry in our home for a few days along with the Brahmanas, Omnipresent Lord, and sanctify the House of Nimi with the dust of Thy feet.' Thus besought by the King, the exalted Lord, Who is ever intent on the world's weal, stayed there, bringing joy to the men and women of the city of Mithilā (26-37).

Śrutadeva, prostrating himself, as Janaka had done, before Achyuta and the sages when He came to his house, danced for very joy, his garments whirling about him. He seated them on grass seats that had been brought and placed for them, and greeting them with words of welcome joyously bathed their feet along with his wife. And with that water, the fortunate man sprinkled himself, his home and family, happy at the realization of all his hopes. He worshipped them, making offerings of fruit and other customary presents, tokens of hospitality which could be obtained without difficulty, such as water scented with the fragrant *uśīra* root and pure and sweet as nectar, fragrant earths¹ and the holy basil, *kuśa* grass and lotus ; and he served them pure food that was conducive to growth in *śattva*. He asked himself wonderingly, 'Ah, how did I, fallen into the blind well

¹ 'Surabhyā mṛdā', which, rendered as 'musk and other such things', seems more appropriately rendered as 'fragrant earth' (which is one of the meanings given by Monier-Williams for *mṛttikā*.)

that is the family life, come to be favoured with the company of Krishna and of the Brahmanas in whose hearts His glorious image ever dwells,¹ and the dust of whose feet is the source of all that purifies !' (38-42).

When they, having received hospitality, were resting in comfort, Srutadeva sat down near them, along with his wife, children and dependants, and spoke thus, as he lovingly pressed the feet of Krishna. Srutadeva said : ' It is not as if the Supreme Purusha has come to us just this day ; He did so when, creating the universe by His own powers, He entered it in His own essence. It is like the sleeper creating a new world, that of dreams, with his own mind out of his nescience,² and imagining that he lives and moves and has his being in it. Even in the case of the pure-hearted, who are constantly engaged in hearing Thy praises sung or themselves speaking them, in worshipping Thee and making their prostrations to Thee, and who, when they discourse among themselves, talk only of Thee, Thou shinest only in the core of their hearts. Though seated in the heart, Thou art very far from those whose minds are distracted by activities ; they are unable to grasp Thee. But Thou art very near indeed to those whose minds have been properly attuned.³ Salutations to Thee, Who revealest Thyself as the Supreme Spirit⁴ to those who know that the Ātman is the only Reality ; Who dispensest the *samsāric* life to the *jīva* ; Who controullest the limiting adjunct that invests it, consisting of the caused and the uncaused ; Whose knowledge is not obscured by Thy own Māyā, which overlays that of others. Instruct us, Thy servants, O Lord, what can we do for Thee ? When Thou showest Thyself to any man, that moment all his travails are ended' (43-49).

Srī Suka said : Having heard him, the Lord, Who destroys the tribulations of those that take refuge in Him, took him by the hand and spoke to him with a

¹ ' ātma-niketa-bhūsuraiḥ ' is rendered by S. as ' different vehicles of the image of Krishna '. ² S. *alt.* ' by Thy Power of Māyā '. ³ ' properly attuned ' by the practice of hearing and speaking the Lord's praises, and so on. ⁴ *adhyātmavidām parātmāne* : ' as the Supreme Spirit Who dispenses liberation to those who have ceased regarding the body as the soul ' (S.)

smile. The Lord said : ' O Brahman, you must know that these have come here to bless you. They go about the worlds with Me, purifying them by the dust of their feet. The gods, holy places and sacred waters purify, but slowly, after a long time, and then only those who go to them, bathe in them, or worship them, and that too because the eyes of men who are worthy of reverence have rested on them. The Brahmana is by birth superior to all creatures in this world ; more so if he has austerities, knowledge, and contentment to his credit ; how much greater, then, should he be who adores Me ?¹ This Form of Mine with the four arms is not dearer to Me than the Brahmana. While all the gods are in Me, all the Vedas are with the Brahmana. Stupid men who do not know this, while according reverence to images and so on, find fault with and scorn the Brahmana, the Guru who is none other than Me and their own *Ātman*. The Brahmana, seeing Me in all things, is firmly convinced that the universe, comprising the sentient and the non-sentient, and the principles that bring it into existence, are all My Forms. Therefore, O Brahman, you should worship² these Brahmanas in the faith that they are Me. Doing that, you will be worshipping Me directly ; otherwise, any worship offered Me, however lavish, would be no worship at all ' (50-57).

Srī Suka said : Thus exhorted by the Lord, he worshipped Krishna and the Brahmanas, looking upon them as one, and achieved liberation, and so did the King of Mithilā. And the exalted Lord, Who was devoted to His devotees, having sojourned with these two and instructed them on the path of duty, returned to Dvāravatī, O King (58-59).

CHAPTER LXXXVII

THE VEDAS PRAISE THE LORD

Parikshit asked : ' O Brahman, how can the Vedas, which can speak only of the phenomenal world constituted by the three *guṇas*, reveal directly the Brahma, Which is indefinable, being devoid of qualities and thus

¹ ' in his heart ' (S. would add). ² ' Matkalayā ', which S. explains as ' adoration of Me, by concentrating on a fraction of Me '.

beyond the worlds of cause and effect, and untouched by them?' (1).

Srī Suka answered: The Supreme Lord created the intellect, the organs of perception and action, the mind and the vital airs, to provide the *jīvas* with a world of experience, to perform works, to satisfy their desires in the different worlds, and to win release. This secret teaching about the Brahma was imparted to, and treasured by the most ancient of sages. He who receives it with faith and makes it his own will, by ridding himself of all possessions, achieve the supreme goal (2-3).

In this connection, I shall relate to you a legend about the sage Narayana and the dialogue that took place between Him and Nārada. Once upon a time, Nārada, who is dear to the Lord, came in the course of his world-wanderings to the hermitage of Narayana to see the primordial sage, Who has, from the very beginning of the present *Kalpa*, been engaged in Bhāratavarsha in austerities marked by righteousness, wisdom and dispassion, for the prosperity and eternal welfare of men. Prostrating himself before Him, who sat with the sages of Kalāpa-grāma about Him, he asked Him this very question, 'O best of the Kurus. To him the Blessed Lord related, with the sages listening, a discussion bearing on the Brahma that had taken place among the sages who have dwelt in the Janaloka from remote antiquity (4-8).

The Blessed One said: 'O son of the Self-Existent, there was in the far past a Brahma-Sattra in Janaloka, when you were away on a visit to Sveta-dvīpa to see its sovereign lord. The mind-born sages vowed to celibacy, who live there, had a thorough discussion on the Brahma, bringing out the connection of the Vedantic texts with the topic. And there this very question was raised, which I am glad you have put to me. Though they were all equals in their knowledge of the scriptures, their austerities and uprightness, and were all alike in looking upon no man as friend, or foe, or neutral, they constituted one among themselves as the speaker, the rest hearing him with attention. Sanandana spoke thus: 'As the Lord, having abstracted within Himself this universe of His own creation, lay in *yogic* slumber along with His Powers, the Vedas roused Him at the end of

the dissolution with words that proclaimed His glory, even as the bards who live on the bounty of an emperor wait on him and wake him at dawn by singing of the exploits that have won him splendid fame' (9-13).

The Vedas said: 'Victory to Thee, O Invincible, manifest Thy mastery by destroying the nescience of the *jīvas* in all bodies, stationary and moving, which utilizes the *guṇas* for their undoing. All powers and attributes of supreme majesty are innate to Thee, O Lord That awakenest all the faculties of the *jīva*. The Veda may presume to speak of Thee as Thou divertest Thyself sometimes with *Māyā*, while remaining at all times established in Thy essential nature (14). The Vedic *mantras* (or the seers thereof) know that all objects of perception are the Brahma, from the fact that That alone remains unchanged, while everything else arises from and merges again in It, even as all things made of earth, come out of earth and become one with it again. Therefore they regard Thee as That to which all thought and all names point. Wherever men may set foot, how can it be said that they do not set foot on earth? (15). O Thou That lordest it over the *Māyā* of the three-fold strand (the *guṇas*), men of discrimination, convinced of this, have plunged into that ocean of nectar, Thy glorious story, which dispels the sins of all beings, and shed their sins and sorrows. Need we say, then, that those others do so, who, freed from the promptings of the mind and the vicissitudes of time by virtue of having intuited the Self, devote themselves wholly to the ecstatic adoration of Thy Real Essence, Eternal Self-knowledge and Bliss? (16). Of those men alone who follow Thee it may be truly said that they live; others merely draw breath like the bellows. It is by Thy Grace (by virtue of Thy Presence in them), that Mahat, Ahamkāra and the rest create the body (cosmic and individual). Entering each of the five-fold sheaths of these, Thou assumest its appearance and activatest it. But Thou art really That which is mentioned in the Veda after all these sheaths. Thou art distinct from the gross and the subtle, being their Witness and the Reality That underlies them, and That alone remains un-negated (17). Among the followers of

the traditional practices of the sages, the Sārkarākshas meditate on Thee as the Brahma located in the region of the stomach (navel); while the Āruṇis meditate on Thee as located in "the little space" within the heart, from which radiate the *nādis*; those who reach and go up through the *nādi* that leads from the heart to the head, Thy supreme abode, where they may attain Thee, O Ananta, do not return here to fall into the jaws of death (*samsāra*) again (18). Thou seemest to enter, though as their material cause Thou art present in them already, the multifarious bodies of Thy creation, and manifestest Thyself in them unequally, like fire, according to the differences between them. Therefore men of unclouded intellect, who have renounced the fruits of all action, see Thee in Thy essence as the One abiding Truth and Reality, uniform and undifferentiated, behind these phenomenal appearances (19). The Vedas speak of the *jīva*, who dwells in these bodies of his own making, and whose true nature is not really veiled by cause or effect, as the image¹ of Thee in Whom resides all powers. Having by the exercise of discrimination arrived at this truth about the *jīva*, enlightened men devote themselves here on earth to the worship of Thy feet in the confident faith that only by performing² all *karmas* ordained by the Veda in the spirit of dedication to those feet, they can hope to reap the fruit of release from the cycle of birth and death (20). There are some few, O Supreme Lord, who have no wish even for liberation; since they have shed all weariness by plunging into that great ocean of nectar, the tale of the glorious doings of Thee That hast taken to Thyself a body to reveal to men the truth about the nature of the Self, which is so difficult to grasp,—and have, for the sake of being in the company of the swans that haunt Thy lotus feet, discarded all domestic ties (21). This body, so eminently fitted for Thy service, is as amenable to us as our own soul, a true friend, or a loved one. And yet, alas, men do not give themselves in joyous adoration to Thee, though Thou, their well-wisher, their Beloved, their very soul, art ever alert to

¹ (*lit.*) 'part or fraction' (See Notes). ² (*lit.*) 'by sowing in that field (Thy feet) all *karmas* . . . dedication'.

respond. They destroy their souls by pampering the perishable. Because of the tendencies established by such indulgence, they come to wander in the frightful maze of birth and death, saddled with unworthy bodies (22). That Reality Which the sages, who have controlled the breath, the mind and the senses, and are established in yoga, meditate on in their hearts, was attained even by Thy enemies, as a result of their constant thinking on Thee. The women who delighted in the arms that resembled the body of the king of the serpents, and we, who see Thee as uniform and all-pervasive, and contemplate ceaselessly on Thy lotus feet, are equal in Thy sight (23). Ah, who in this world can possibly know Thee, the Fore-existent, O Lord, since all of them, subject to birth and death, came later, after Brahmā issued out of Thee, and the two classes of gods followed? When Thou reposest, withdrawing all this into Thyself, there remains neither gross nor subtle, nor the product of the two combined, nor the force of time, nor in fact anything else, Sāstra included (24). Those who teach the doctrine of the brand-new creation of something that had not existed previously; those who propagate the view of the destruction of real existents; those who speak of a plurality of selves and of difference between them; those who maintain that the results of *Karma* are real—all these are misled by superimposed error. Difference and other such notions, which are based on the assumption that the soul is possessed of the three *guṇas*, are really engendered by ignorance of Thy true nature. But nescience can have no power over Thee That art beyond its reach and art in Thy nature pure Knowledge (25). All this universe, composed of the three *guṇas*, and the *jīva* himself, though unreal, seem distinct realities because they are projected by the mind on Thee. But the knowers of the Self look upon all this (world of experience and experiencers) as being without exception real, because it is the product of the Self. Is it not a fact that men do not throw away things made of gold, because they know they are gold? The universe created by the Paramātmān, and the soul that enters and informs it, are both undoubtedly the Paramātmān Himself (26). They alone who adore Thee as the

Indweller in all that lives, plant their feet contemptuously on the head of Death. But Thou bindest with the words of the Veda those, however learned, who turn their faces away from Thee, even as animals are bound. It is those that have given their love to Thee that sanctify, not these others (27). While Thou art Thyself without organs, Thou quickenest the organs of all creatures, by the light of Thy innate wisdom. And so the gods and the Lords of Creation, being wedded to nescience, pay Thee tribute, like feudatory chiefs to their overlord, the Emperor, by doing their allotted tasks in fear of Thee, and themselves live on the offerings of men (28). O Lord That art eternally free and beyond the reach of Māyā, when Thou chooseth to disport Thyself, by a mere look, with her, that moment the *jīvas*, who tenant all categories of creatures, stationary and moving, come into existence by uniting with their subtle bodies and emerging from Thee, thanks to the activation of their latent *karmas* by Māyā prompted by that look. O Lord That art supreme (in Thy compassion) and (aloof and unattached) like the sky, and almost indistinguishable from the void in being beyond the reach of word and thought, Thou dost not look upon any as Thine own or as alien to Thee (29). If *jīvas* were numberless, eternal and all-pervading, then, O Everlasting Lord, it would not be right to say that Thou controllest them, because they would not be amenable to control. If that was not the case, Thy control would be a fact; since That Which is present uninterruptedly as Cause in all Its effects must necessarily control them. Those who say that they know what That is, know practically nothing about It, since what can be the object of knowledge is by that very reason flawed (30). Neither Prakṛti nor Puruṣa nor both together can be born (as the *jīva*), since they are both beginningless. It is by the association of the two that all creatures come into being like water-bubbles. That is why all *jīvas* lie abstracted within Thee, undistinguished by their diverse names and qualities, as in honey do the various kinds of juices, or merge in Thee, the Supreme, like rivers in the ocean (31). Seeing the *jīvas* entangled by Thy Māyā in the error that leads to birth after birth, the

wise give their loving devotion to Thee that putteth a stop to *samsāra*. How can fears of the transmigratory life assail them, since the three-naved wheel of time, which is Thy frown, inspires constant dread only in those that do not take refuge in Thee? (32). Those who do not put their trust in the Guru's feet, but try to control that exceedingly fickle steed, the mind, which is not easily tamed even by those who have subdued the senses and the life-breath, are worn out, O Lord That knowest no birth, devising expedients; and they find themselves afflicted by endless misfortunes in life, like merchants on the high seas without a helmsman (33). When Thou, the Abode of all bliss, art immediately available as his very soul to him who devotes himself to Thee, what use can men possibly have for kinsfolk, children, their own bodies and lives, for wife, wealth, house, land or chariot? To those who, oblivious of this supreme truth, run after the pleasures of sex, what conceivable gain can this ephemeral and savourless existence bring to make them happy? (34). Those sages who cherish Thy lotus feet in their hearts, and are wholly free from egotism, resort to many holy waters and shrines on earth, though even the water that has washed their feet has the power to destroy all sins. They never more return to the domestic life, which saps the noblest powers of man, since even those who for the nonce think on Thee, the Ever-blissful Ātman, do not do that (35). If it be argued that the universe is real because it originated from the Real, that would be opposed to logic. The effect is sometimes different from the cause. Nor, even where it seems to partake of its substance, is it always real; since its apparent reality may be due to the association of what is unreal with what is real. What is illusory from the standpoint of absolute truth may have its uses in practical life. It is illusion none the less, because it comes from beginningless nescience. The words of Thy Revelation confuse those who are obsessed with the importance of ritual works, because they are used with divers implications (36). Since the universe did not exist before (creation), nor will it remain after dissolution, it is concluded that in the interim it exists merely as a phenomenal projection on Thee, the One

Reality. Hence it is explained on the analogy of the artificing of different classes of substances and imposing shapes and forms on them. It is the ignorant who take a figment of the imagination for truth (37). Because the *jīva* clings to his nescience thanks to the power of *Māyā*, he is absorbed in the body, the senses, and so on. Identifying himself with them and attributing to himself their qualities and characteristics, his own glory veiled from him, he enters the transmigratory life. But Thou sheddest *Māyā* as lightly as the snake its slough; shining in Thy ever-welling glory and measureless majesty, on which all the eight attributes of sovereign power attend (38). O Lord, if renouncers do not pull up by the roots the instinctive desires lodged in the heart, Thou, though ever-present therein, art of as little avail to those unworthy ascetics as the jewel on his neck to the man who has forgotten that it is there. Those pretended yogis who are intent on pampering the flesh suffer both here and hereafter, from death whom they cannot ward off, and from Thee, Whom they fail to attain (39). O Lord That art possessed of all auspicious attributes, the mind of him who has attained knowledge of Thee does not linger on the joys and sorrows that come to him as the fruit of his good and evil past, which Thou allottest; nor does he then recognise the injunctions and prohibitions that bind those who are in love with the body. Cherished in their hearts by men who have taken Thee in through the ear, listening to the tale of Thy glory that has been sung from age to age, Thou art, too, the Goal that they duly reach, the Goal that is liberation (40). Even the masters of the celestial realms could never hope to know all of Thee, for Thou knowest no limits; why, Thou Thyself dost not know! How marvellous, O Lord, that within Thee should whirl simultaneously, like dust in the sky, cosmoses numberless, sheathed in their manifold coverings, propelled by the force of time! That is why (we) the Vedas, examining and eliminating what is "not—That", point to Thee as the fine fruit (of our quest) and there rest' (41).

The Blessed Lord (Narayana) said: 'The sons of *Brahmā*, having heard the teaching about the *Ātman*, honoured Sanandana; they had realized their desire to

know the Ātman in Its essence. Thus was the quintessence of the secret teachings of all the Vedas and the Purāṇas extracted by those mighty souls, your elders, who tread the aerial ways. You may now go your ways, O son of Brahmā, fixing firmly in your mind this teaching about the Ātman, which is calculated to burn up all desires' (42-44).

Srī Suka said : The self-controlled sage, vowed to life-long celibacy, received with ardent faith the teaching imparted by the R̥shi, and fixing it firmly in his mind found fulfilment. And he expressed his gratitude in these words : ' Salutations to the exalted Lord, Krishna of the spotless renown, Who is incarnate on earth in many an attractive guise for the emancipation of all creatures '. Making his prostrations to the primordial sage and His pure-hearted disciples, he went from there to the hermitage of my own father, Dvaipāyana. Welcomed by the blessed one, he took his seat and related to him what he had heard from the lips of Narayana. We have now answered, O King, the question that you put us—how the mind may dwell on the Brahma, indescribable though It is, being devoid of qualities (45-49).

Let us dwell in our minds ceaselessly on Hari, the Lord established in His essential being, Who rebuffs Māyā and offers freedom from fear ; Who conceives the universe and participates in its creation, preservation and destruction as the Overlord of Prakṛti and Puruṣha ; Who, on creating the universe, enters it along with the self-conscious *jīva*, and makes bodies for his enjoyment and rules him in them ; Who is the suppliant *jīva*'s sanctuary, reaching Which he is no more vexed by nescience than the sleeper by his body (50).

CHAPTER LXXXVIII

SIVA AND VRKĀSURA

The King observed, ' Those, whether gods, Asuras or men, who are worshippers of Siva, Who scorns enjoyments, are mostly men of wealth, and they enjoy all pleasures too ; not those who are devoted to Hari, the Consort of Lakshmi. I should like to know why this is so, for it greatly perplexes me that, while the natures of

the two all-powerful Gods are so contrary, the fortunes of their devotees should be no less contrary but opposite (1-2).

Srī Suka said : Siva, ever united with His Power and invested with all the *guṇas*, has three characteristics ; for the ego (over which He presides) is of three kinds, known as *Vaikārika*, *Taijasa* and *Tāmasa*. From these were produced the sixteen evolutes. He who devotes himself to the worship of the deity that rules any one of them enjoys all the powers that are germane to it. But Hari is untouched by the *guṇas*. He is the Purusha Himself, the all-seeing Witness, Who is beyond the reach of Prakṛti. He who worships Him is no longer under the sway of the *guṇas* (3-5).

When the horse sacrifice had been concluded, the King, your grandfather, who was hearing the exalted Lord expound Dharma, put the same question to Achyuta. The Lord, incarnate in the House of Yadu for the supreme good of men, was pleased with him for being so attentive ; and He answered him thus. The Lord said : ' From him to whom I wish to do good I take away his wealth gradually. When he has lost his all, his own folk desert him, adding to his misery. When all his efforts at acquiring wealth are frustrated, leaving him weary and disgusted, and he makes friends with those who are devoted to Me, then I bestow My plenary grace on him, whereby he realizes the Supreme Brahma, subtler than the subtlest, pure Consciousness, Existence and Infinity. But many men, even after the frustration of all their hopes, prefer to worship others, knowing that I am not easy to please. Intoxicated with the accession of sovereign power, which they obtain by the grace of those who are easily propitiated, they become arrogant and forget themselves ; they forget and even despise those who had bestowed their favours on them ' (6-11).

Srī Suka continued : Brahmā, Vishnu, Siva and others are equally potent for blessing and cursing. But while Siva and Brahmā grant a boon or lay a curse instantly, not so Achyuta. In this connection there is a legend current about the Lord-of-the-Mountain granting a boon to Vṛakāśura and landing Himself in straits. The

Asura, Vṛka, son of Sakuni, happened to meet Nārada on the road, and the blockhead enquired which of the three Gods could be propitiated without much effort. He told him, 'Go and worship the Lord Siva assiduously. You will gain your end, for He is as ready to be pleased with a little merit as to be angered by a minor lapse. Having bestowed boundless empire on the ten-headed (Rāvana) and Bāṇa, because they panegyricized Him like court-bards, He got into endless trouble with them.' Thus advised, the Asura propitiated Hara at Kēdāra by sacrificing to Him, offering his own flesh as oblations in the fire. When he failed to obtain a vision of the Lord, he in his disappointment prepared, on the seventh day, to sever with an axe his head, with the hair on it still wet from bathing in the sacred waters there. Thereupon Dhūrjati, the infinitely compassionate, rose from the fire like the god of fire himself, and restrained him by seizing both his hands in His, as we should do. By His touch his body was again made whole. And He called to him, 'Stop, my good man, stop. Ask any boon you like, and I will grant it. I am pleased if those who are devoted to Me offer Me even a little water. You mortify your body unnecessarily' (12-20).

The wicked creature chose to ask a boon of the God, which brought terror to all beings, when he said, 'Whoever it is on whose head I lay my hand, he should die'. On hearing that, the exalted Lord Rudra looked sad; but He laughed and said, 'Yes', granting him the boon, which was like giving milk to a serpent. And, do you know, the Asura proceeded to test the boon forthwith by placing his hand on Sambhu's head! Siva was aghast at what He had done. Pursued by him, He fled in fear and trembling to the outermost limits of earth and heaven and all directions, ultimately heading for the north. Not knowing what to do, the great gods did nothing. He reached the glorious Vaikuntha,¹ which lies beyond the darkness; there Narayana abides, the direct and paramount Refuge of the renouncers who have stilled the mind and abjured

¹ S. takes this to refer to Śvetadvīpa, other commentators to Badari; the latter assume that Narayana is the Ṛshi Narayana, the incarnate Vishnu.

violence. There is no coming back for him who goes there. Seeing from afar him (Vrka) who was in the grip of an evil passion, the exalted Lord, the Dispeller of sorrows, went forward to meet him, assuming by His *yogic* powers the form of a young student. Equipped with grass girdle, deer skin, staff and rosary, and carrying *darbha* grass in His hand, He, who glowed like fire with His power, saluted him with all seeming deference. And the Lord said to him : ' O son of Sakuni, you are evidently tired. Why have you come all this way ? Do rest for a while ; the body is the source of all good. Tell us, if it may be told, O capable one, what you are after. Men usually take the assistance of willing helpers to achieve their ends ' (21-30).

Srī Suka said : Thus asked by the Lord, in words that dropped nectar, his fatigue fell from him, and he told Him all that he had done. The Lord said, ' If it be so, then I do not believe the words of Him Who, by Daksha's curse, has come to behave like a ghou, and rules over ghouls and the spirits of the dead. If you have faith in what He said, because He is the Teacher of the worlds, O Lord of the Dānavas, you can quickly enough put it to the proof, my good sir, by placing your hand on your own head. If Sambhu's words should be found to be untrue in any way, then, O best of Dānavas, you should kill him for a liar, so that He may not tell lies again '. Bewildered by those beguiling words of the Lord, which fell so pleasantly on the ear, the witless fellow forgetfully put his hand on his own head. Instantly he fell down, his head shivered, like one struck by a thunderbolt ; and from the sky came shouts of ' Victory ! ' ' Salutations ! ' ' Well done ! ' The gods, sages, manes and Gandharvas let fall showers of flowers on seeing the wicked Vrka slain. And Siva was delivered from His plight. The exalted Lord, the Supreme Purusha, addressed the Lord-of-the-Mountain, when He had been freed, saying, ' Ah ! Great God, Noble Lord, this wicked fellow has been destroyed by his own sins. What creature, O All-powerful Lord, could offend against the great and thrive ? How much worse, if he had wronged the Lord and Mentor of the worlds ! ' (31-39).

He who recounts, or hears related, this story of the

deliverance of the Lord-of-the-Mountain by Hari, that Ocean of Power Which baffles speech and thought, and Who is none other than the Transcendent and Supreme Purusha Himself, will be delivered from the cycle of birth and death and from his foes (40).

CHAPTER LXXXIX

BHRGU AND THE TRINITY : ARJUNA AND THE BRAHMANA'S CHILD

Srī Suka said : The sages were engaged in the Sattrā sacrifice on the bank of the Sarasvatī, O King, when there arose a discussion among them as to who was the greatest of the three great Gods. Being desirous of knowing, they sent Bhr̥gu, the son of Brahmā, to ascertain this. And he went to the audience hall of Brahmā. Wishing to find out His true disposition, he did not pay his devoirs to Him or sing His praises. The all-powerful Lord was ablaze with wrath. But He, the Self-existent, repressed by an effort of will His anger, because it was his son, as fire is put out with water, its product (1-4).

He then went to Kailāsa, and the Great God jumped up in joy and would have embraced him, like His own brother. But he would not have it; he told him, ' You have taken to evil ways '. That angered the Lord of the fiery eyes, and He raised His trident to kill him, but the Goddess fell at His feet and pacified Him (5-7).

He then went on to Vaikuntha where dwells the Lord Janārdana. He kicked Him on the breast as He lay reclining on the lap of the Goddess of Plenty. Thereupon the exalted Lord, the Goal of the good, rose along with Lakshmī, and getting off His couch bowed His head to the sage and said, ' Welcome, O Brahman, take this seat ; rest a while. Pardon us, great sir, we did not know you had come. Exceedingly delicate are your feet, my child.' And warmly pressing with His hands the feet of the Brahmana, He went on, ' Sanctify Me, as well as the worlds and the Guardians thereof, who are in Me, with the water that has washed your feet, and from which sacred waters derive their sanctity. This day, blessed one, I have won Lakshmī, to keep

with Me for ever ; she will abide on my breast now that my sins have been destroyed by your foot' (8-12).

Srī Suka said : When the Lord of Vaikuntha spoke thus, those charming words brought supreme contentment and satisfaction to Bhṛgu ; his eyes filling with tears, his heart yearning for Him with loving devotion, he uttered no word. Returning to the Sattrā session, where the sages were engaged in chanting the Vedas, Bhṛgu narrated his experiences in full, O King. When they heard that, the sages were filled with wonder. They had no longer any doubt that Vishnu was the greatest of them all. 'For in Him one may find peace and freedom from fear, Dharma in all its integrity, and wisdom, and the dispassion that goes with it ; from Him come sovereign power with its eight-fold attributes and the fame that rids the mind of its impurities. He is spoken of as the Supreme Goal of the sages who have abjured all violence, who are at peace with themselves and look with an equal eye on all, and of the saints who have nothing to call their own. The form that He delights in is pure *sattva* ; the Brahmanas are His chosen gods ; to Him are devoted men of consummate intellect, who have shed all desires and know peace. The Rakshasas, the Asuras and the gods are His three forms, created by Māyā, the possessor of the three *guṇas* ; but of these it is the *sāttvic* form that subserves the supreme ends of life' (13-19).

Srī Suka went on : Having arrived at this conclusion, which should serve to dispel the doubts of men, the Brahmanas on the banks of the Sarasvatī worshipped the lotus feet of the Supreme and attained liberation (20).

The Sūta commented, 'The voyager on the high seas of life, constantly drinking in the glories of the Supreme, the fragrant nectar which flowed from the lotus lips of the son of the sage and which destroys all fear of the transmigratory existence, sheds the weariness of his wanderings' (21).

Srī Suka continued his tale : A child born to the wife of a Brahmana in Dvārakā died immediately after birth, when it had barely touched the earth, O scion of the Bharatas. The Brahmana took the dead child and laid it down at the gate of the King's palace, and cried out

in his misery and dejection, 'My little babe is dead because of the misdeeds of this unworthy Kshattriya, who hates the Brahmanas, who is depraved, covetous and sensual. Subjects that are dependent on a King who delights in cruelty, who is wicked and undisciplined, are doomed to poverty and perpetual sorrow'. In the same way, the Brahmana sage left his second child, and again his third at the King's door, repeating the same words. When the ninth child died, Arjuna, who happened to be with Keśava, heard those words of the Brahmana. And he told him, 'What is the use, O Brahman? In this city of yours there seems to be no man who ever handled a bow, not even a third-rate Kshattriya. These are surely Brahmanas assembled for a Sattrā sacrifice! They who look on while Brahmanas wail, despoiled of wealth, wife and children, merely put on, like players, the garb of Kshattriyas in order to make a living. I shall, venerable sir, be here and protect any child that you, sorrowing couple, may have; if I fail to fulfil my pledge, I will jump into the fire and expiate my sin' (22-30).

The Brahmana retorted, 'What Sankarshana, Vāsudeva, Pradyumna, foremost of archers, and Aniruddha, whom no chariot-warrior can stand up to, could not save, how can you save, doing what the Lords of the universe have found impossible? It is presumptuous folly that make you attempt the task. I do not believe you can do it' (31-32).

Arjuna rejoined, 'I am not Sankarshana, O Brahman, nor Krishna, nor the son of Krishna. This is Arjuna, whose bow is the Gāndīva. Do not think lightly of my prowess, which pleased the Three-eyed, O Brahman. I will vanquish death in a fight and bring you back your child, great sir'. Thus assured by Phālguna, the Brahmana went home rejoicing, having heard of Pārtha's prowess. When the time of his wife's confinement drew near, that worthy Brahmana came to Arjuna in great agitation and begged him saying, 'Save my child from death, O save him!' And he, purifying himself with holy water, made his obeisance to the Great God, invoked his celestial weapons and, armed with the ready-strung Gāndīva, covered the lying-in chamber, above,

below and all around, with arrows powered with many a magical weapon, making a regular cage of them. But the moment the Brahmana's wife was delivered of the child, it disappeared bodily into the sky, wailing repeatedly. Thereupon the Brahmana inveighed against Vijaya in the presence of Krishna, saying, 'Look at my folly, putting my faith in a eunuch's boast! Who else can protect him whom Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Keśava could not? Fie on Arjuna, the liar, fie on the bow of the boaster, the wicked fool who thinks he can recover what Heaven had doomed' (33-42).

While the learned Brahmana was thus abusing him, Phālguna, employing occult lore, went to Samyamānī, the abode of the Lord Yama. Not finding the Brahmana's child there, he went on, ready-armed, to Indra's city, and then to those of the rulers of the South-east and the South-west, the cities of the moon, Vāyu and Varuṇa, and then to the nether regions, to the highest heaven and to other places. Failing to recover the Brahmana's child, and being unable to fulfil his promise, he would have thrown himself into the fire, had not Krishna prevented him. He dissuaded him, saying, 'I shall show you the Brahmana's child. You must not despise yourself. The very men who now blame us shall establish our spotless fame' (43-46).

Having thus persuaded Arjuna, the All-powerful Lord got with him into His own celestial chariot and proceeded west. Passing the seven island-continent, each with its seven mountains, and the seven seas, and the Lokāloka mountain, He entered the zone of intense darkness. In that darkness the horses Saibya, Sugrīva, Megha-pushpa and Balāhaka, could not proceed, O foremost of the Bharatas. Seeing their plight, the Lord Krishna, supreme over the master-yogis, sent before them His own discus that shone like a thousand suns. Piercing with its dazzling brilliance that frightful, inspissated gloom, the product of Prakṛti, the Sudar-sana, swift as thought, made its way through it like Rama's arrow, sped from the bow, shooting through the enemy forces. Looking through the passage made by the discus at the supernal Light, limitless and all-pervading, beyond the darkness, Arjuna had to shut

his eyes, on which it beat so fiercely. The chariot then entered the water, with its huge and massive billows driven by a high wind, and in that water was a marvellous edifice¹ of surpassing brilliance, adorned with thousands of jewelled pillars (47-53).

Therein he saw the wonderful and terrible Ananta, who dazzled the eye with the lustre of the gems in his thousand hoods, and whose two thousand eyes blazed; he looked like the crystal mountain, and his throats and tongues were of a dark blue. And he beheld reposing on his coils as on a soft couch, the Omnipresent and Glorious Lord, the All-Highest, Who rules over the Lords of creation; gleaming like the rain-cloud, clad in His tawny raiment, a gracious smile on His face, His eyes long and sparkling, His mass of curls with the sheen on them of the rows of brilliants on His diadem and ear-pendants; with His eight long and comely arms, and the Kausthubha gem on His neck, the Śrīvatsa mark and the garland of wild flowers; waited upon by Sunanda, Nanda and other constant attendants, and His weapons, the discus and the rest in human form, and by the Goddesses of Opulence and Grace, by Aja and the Goddess of Fame, and by all His glorious attributes in concrete forms. Achyuta made His obeisance to His own Ātman, the Infinite, and so did Jishnu, profoundly awed by the beatific vision. The Bhūmā, the Master of the world-creators, addressed them, who stood before Him with joined palms, in a sublime voice, smiling as He said, 'Wishing to see you both, I had the Brahmana's sons brought here. You, fractions of myself, incarnate on earth for the protection of Dharma, should, having dispatched the Asuras that burden the earth, hurry back to Me here. You, the sages Nara and Narayana, should, though you have no unrealized wish, set, because of your pre-eminence, an example to the world in the practice of Dharma so as to promote its welfare' (54-60).

Thus bidden by the exalted Lord, the Creator of the universe, the two Krishnas bowed low to Him, the All, saying, 'As Thou wishest, O Lord;' and taking the Brahmana's children with them, went home rejoicing,

¹ S. describes this as Mahākālapuram. *Toshinī* gives a description of it from the Mr̥tyunjaya Tantra.

the way they had come. And they handed over to the Brahmana his children who, in age and appearance, were exactly as he had seen them last. Pārtha, seeing Vishnu in His essential form, was overcome with wonder; and he now realized that what little power men had they owed wholly to Krishna's grace. Performing on earth many such marvellous exploits, He (Krishna) enjoyed the common pleasures of men, and offered many a splendid sacrifice. The exalted Lord, from His position of supremacy, showered all blessings that the heart could desire on His subjects, Brahmanas and others, in their due season, as Indra does. Slaying many unrighteous kings, and destroying others by the hands of Arjuna and many others, He made Dharma prevail easily, through the instrumentality of Yudhishtira and others like him (61-66).

CHAPTER XC

THE QUEENS' COMPLAINT

Sri Suka said : The Lord of the Goddess Sri lived happily in His own opulent city of Dvārakā, peopled by the foremost of the Vṛshnis; where women, superbly dressed and with the bloom of youth on them, flashed like streaks of lightning as they played ball on the terraces of many-storied mansions; where the highways were always crowded with elephants born on the Matanga mountain and dripping ichor, and with splendidly equipped men-at-arms, richly caparisoned horses, and chariots blazing with gold; which abounded in gardens and parks and resounded everywhere with the hum of bees and the chattering of birds that haunted its flower-filled glades. In that city, He, spouse and lover of His sixteen thousand consorts, sported with them, taking as many forms, in their sumptuous homes with their pools of pellucid water fragrant with the pollen of lily and *kalhāra*, *kumuda* and lotus in bloom, and their choir of singing birds. Smeared with the saffron from the breasts of women who embraced Him, the magnificent Lord bathed in the rivers and played in the water, while the Gandharvas sang His glory, accompanying themselves on the *mṛdanga*, *paṇava* and kettle-drum, and so did the

chroniclers, bards and minstrels, as they delightedly played on the *vīṇā*. Showered with water from squirts by the laughing women, Achyuta splashed water on them and enjoyed Himself like the Lord of the Yakshas playing with his Yakshis. With their wet clothes revealing their thighs and breasts, and the flowers falling from their high-piled tresses, they drenched Him; and making as if they would take the squirt from Him, embraced their Beloved; and the love thus kindled in their hearts brought them a joy that made the face glow. And Krishna, with the saffron from their breasts sticking to His garland, His massed curls shaken loose in the excitement of the game, went on splashing the water on the young women as they did on Him, like the lord of the elephant herd playing with his mates. Krishna and His womenfolk gave to the dancers, male and female, and to those who lived by singing and playing, raiment and ornaments and garments customary for these sports¹ (1-12).

No wonder that the hearts of His womenfolk were ravished by Krishna's gait and talk, His looks and smiles, His sly jests and embraces, as He thus played with them. In their tranced absorption in Mukunda, they would remain speechless for a while, and then, with their minds running on the Lotus-eyed, talked at random like mad folk. Let me tell you what they said (13-14).

The queens said :

Sleepless, O osprey, wailest thou,
Nor layest down thy head.
But somewhere slumbers in the night
The Lord, Who's ev'r-awake.²
Hast thou, perchance, like us, O friend,
Been stricken to the heart's core
By the smile of the Lotus-eyed,
His playful, gracious glance ?

¹ V. suggests that the raiment etc. given to the musicians, were those that had been used by the Lord and His queens. ² R. 'He sleeps, where no one knows, oblivious of His surroundings'. J. & V. (v.r.) 'Whose intelligence is ever awake'.

Seeing nowhere thy lover true,
 Though night is come, thou weapest,
 Sealing thy eyes, so pitiful,
 Poor *chakravāki*, dear !
 Or can it be that thou wouldst wear,
 Bond-slave to Him, even as we,
 The wreath Achyuta's feet has touched,
 Twined in thy plaited hair ?

O wakeful sea that sleep has fled,
 Thou moanest all day long.
 Hast Thou, alas, been brought, like us,
 To this sorrowful pass,
 By Him despoiled as we were ?
 Mukunda took from us
 All that was uniquely ours,
 Our mark and splendid sign¹.

Enfeebled as thou art, O moon,
 By thy sad decline,
 Thy rays suffice not to dispel
 This darkness ; could it be
 That thou, like us, having forgot
 Mukunda's whispered words,
 And trying hard to recall them,
 Art struck dumb² ? So it seems.

What did we do to offend thee,
 O wind from the Malaya mount ?
 In hearts Govinda's glance has rent,
 Thou needs must light the flame of love !³

Thou art, O gracious cloud, for sure,
 Bosom friend of the Yādav Prince,
 Love-bound like us, and wrapped in thoughts
 Of Him That has the Srivatsa ;

¹ 'Our mark' : S. takes this to refer to the saffron on their breasts etc., which His embraces had effaced, as Vishnu had taken the Kausthubha from the ocean. R., V. C. & N. agree. J. and *Sukapaksheeya* take it to refer to the innate steadfastness and sublimity of character of which the sea, like the Gopis, had been robbed. ² 'Thy intellect paralysed' (*Sukapaksh.*) ³ Between verses 19 and 20, and again between 21 and 22, there is an extra verse admitted by R., M. and N. For rendering see Notes.

Yearning for Him, in grave unease,
 As thou recallest Him, thy tears
 Fall incessant like ours ; ah me !
 To speak of Him is agony.

Sweet is thy speech, like my sweet-spoken love's.
 Tell me, O koel of the tuneful throat,
 In that voice made to wake the dead to life :
 What can I do this day to pleasure Thee ?

Still thou art, and silent,
 Mountain sagacious.
 Dost meditate, methinks,
 Some lofty design.
 Dost thou too wish, alack,
 To bear on Thy breast¹
 The feet of Vasudeva's
 Son, as we do ?

Your pools² are shrunk, your streams run dry,
 O spouses of the sea.
 Denuded of your lotus wealth,
 You stand this day, denied
 The Loved One's loving glance, as we
 Droop as we wait in vain
 For one look from the Madhus' Lord,
 Our love, Who stole our hearts.

Welcome, O swan ! Be seated, drink this milk,
 And let us hear of Sourī, friend.
 We know thou art His messenger.
 How is He, th' Unconquered ? Happy and
 well?

Does He, in friendship fickle, call to mind
 All that he said to us of yore ?
 And, pray, why should we wait on Him ?
 Tell us, you, whom the worthless One has
 sent.—

¹ i.e. the crest of the mountain. ² This is addressed to the
 rivers, which (in summer) are denied the grace of the sea and
 run dry.

Ah ! is that so ? Go quick and fetch¹ Him,
then,

The Granter of the heart's desire !—

But without Sṛī,—has she alone²

Of womankind given her heart wholly to Him ?
(15-24).

Cherishing such love constantly in their hearts for Krishna, the Lord of the master-yogis, the queens of Mādhava attained the supreme goal. When He irresistibly draws to Himself the hearts of women, whether they hear of His lofty praises sung repeatedly in great compositions or merely hear Him spoken of in some context or other, what wonder that He should have won the hearts of those who were always seeing Him ? And what words can describe the ecstatic devotion of those who, looking upon the Mentor of the worlds as their spouse, applied themselves with all love to His service, doing such tasks as massaging His feet ? (25-27).

Thus the Lord, the Goal of the good, practised the Dharma enjoined by the Veda, and constantly showed how by leading the householder's life one may do one's duty, win abundance and enjoy pleasures. Following the highest Dharmas of the householder, Krishna lived with His sixteen thousand, one hundred consorts. I have already told you of the eight principal queens among those lovely women, beginning with Rukmiṇī, and of their sons in due order. On each of His spouses, Krishna, who works His indefeasible will³, begot ten sons. Of those men of unbounded energy, eighteen were super-charioteers, who won glorious fame ; let me tell you their names. They were Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Diptimān, Bhānu, Sāmba, Madhu, Bṛhadbhānu, Chitrabhānu, Vṛka, Aruṇa, Pushkara, Vedabāhu, Srutadēva, Sunandana, Chitrabāhu, Virūpa, Kavi and Nya-grōdha. Even among these scions of the Madhus, the son of Rukmiṇī was the first, being like his father in every way. This great charioteer married Rukmi's

¹ (lit.) 'arrange to let us speak with Him, without Lakshmi being present'. ² (v. r.) 'Who but she would dance attendance upon Him, Whose words are honey, but Who does not fulfil our wish !'. ³ (v. r.) 'Whose love was never unfruitful'.

daughter, and had a son by her, Aniruddha, who was as strong as ten thousand elephants. And he, Rukmi's daughter's son, married his son's daughter, and to them was born Vajra, sole survivor of the holocaust that followed the episode of the pestle. His son was Pratibāhu, who begot Subāhu. To Subāhu was born Sāntasena, and to him Srutasena (28-38).

None of this family was a pauper or a man with scanty progeny; none short-lived, pusillanimous, or unfriendly to Brahmanas. It would be impossible to reckon, even if one took ten thousand years, O King, the number of the descendants of Yadu, famed for their exploits. It is said that, for the innumerable children of the Yadu clans, three crores and eighty-eight lakhs of tutors were employed. Who can hope to count the mighty Yādavas, when Āhuka (Ugrasena) alone ruled over a hundred millions? Those exceedingly wicked Asuras who had been slain in the wars between the gods and the Asuras were born into this world as men, and they in their monstrous pride harried the people. Directed by Hari to compass their destruction, the gods took birth as the descendants of Yadu. Of them there were a hundred and one clans, O King. And all of them looked up to the Lord Hari as their master; and the entire Yādava race, as well as all others who gave their allegiance to Him, flourished. But the Vṛṣṇis, whose thoughts were ever absorbed by Krishna, whatever they might be doing—whether lying down or sitting, whether walking, talking, playing or bathing—did not realize that He was their own soul. That He, Whose glory, when He appeared among the Yadus, put in the shade the purifying stream that washes His feet; in Whose essential Form friend and foe alike were merged; to Whom belonged the Goddess Śrī of the infinite plenitude, who was beyond the reach of others, though many strive to win Her; Whose name, heard or uttered, puts to rout all that is inauspicious; Who propagated Dharma through the channel of the many *r̥shi* clans; that He, Krishna, armed with His discus, all-destroying time, should have rid the earth of its burden is no matter for wonder. Ever glorious in His triumph is He, Who abides in the hearts of all beings; Whose birth as the

son of Devaki was but in a manner of speaking ; on Whom humbly waited the greatest of the Yadu Chiefs in their assemblies ; Who destroyed unrighteousness by the power of His arm and dispelled the sorrows of all creatures, moving and non-moving ; the mere sight of Whose gracious face with the smile on it kindled the flame of love in the hearts of the women of the cow-colonies and of the city. Let him who would be faithful to Him hear with reverence the story of the various incarnations of the Supreme, made at different times and of His own free will, and the appropriate exploits He performed for safeguarding the norms of Dharma that He had established, and in particular, His incarnation as the foremost of the Yadus. By virtue of that faith growing in strength day by day as a result of constant listening to, recital of and meditation on His auspicious tale, he will reach His world where the irresistible force of Destroyer Death is abated, and from the desire to gain which even emperors of the earth gave up house and home and retired to the penitential woods. (39-48).

(Here ends the *Tenth Book* of *Srimad-Bhāgavatam*.)

SRIMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

BOOK XI

CHAPTER I

THE BRAHMANAS' CURSE

The son of Bādarāyaṇa said : Having destroyed the Asuras with the support of Rama and the Yadus, Krishna relieved the earth of its burden by contriving a catastrophic strife. Using as the instruments of His purpose the sons of Pāṇḍu, who were infuriated by many provocations from their kinsmen and rivals, such as fraud at the gaming table, calculated insults, and the haling of Draupadī by the hair, the All-powerful Lord brought about the slaying of the kings ranged on either side, and thus eased the earth of its burden. Having likewise destroyed other kings and their armies, who oppressed the earth, employing the Yadus, who were under His own protecting arm, He Whose ways are inscrutable reflected, ' Though the earth has apparently been relieved of its burden, I consider that that is not the case, since the irresistible Yadu race remains. This race of Mine, with Me for its protector, will never know defeat at the hands of others, overwhelmingly powerful as it is by reason of its mounting prosperity and strength. So I must see to it that dissension breaks out among the Yadus themselves, like fire in the bamboo clump ; then I can have peace and go to My eternal home ' (1-4).

' Thus resolved, O King, the Supreme and Omnipresent Lord, Who wills what must come to pass, extirpated His own race, a Brahmanical curse serving as the pretext. Having riveted the gaze of men on His own person, from which all the worlds borrowed their beauty, captivated the hearts of all who heard Him and remembered His words, made those who came upon His footprints forget everything else, and spread His fame, celebrated by poets in deathless verse, all over the world, so that generations to come might be helped by it to

pass easily beyond the engulfing darkness (*samsāra*), the Supreme Lord departed to His own abode' (5-7).

The King asked : 'How did the Vṛshṇis, who were friendly to the Brahmanas, generous and ever solicitous in their attentions to elders, come to incur the Brahmanas' curse, especially when they were devoted heart and soul to Krishna ? What was the cause of the curse, O best of Brahmanas, and what form did it take ? How did dissension arise among them, who were so united at heart ? Be pleased to tell me all about it' (8-9).

Sri Suka answered : Even while He lived in His own home on earth, enjoying its delights, with a body that summed up all beauty, and engaged in good works, though He had all that the heart could wish, and thus spread His fruitful fame abroad, He willed the end of His own race in order to complete His task. When the Lord, Who lived in Vasudeva's house thus intent on destruction, had, after the performance of those auspicious rites which conferred every kind of merit, and freed from the sins of Kali all who spoke in praise of them, given them leave to depart, the sages Viśvāmitra, Asita, Kaṇva, Durvāsas, Bhṛgu, Angiras, Kāśyapa, Vāmadeva, Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Nārada and others, left in a body for Pindāraka. The youths of the Yadu clan, who were at play, approached them with mock-humility, and touching their feet, questioned them irreverently, though with seeming deference. Having dressed up Sāmba, the son of Jāmbavatī, as a woman, they told them, 'This dark-eyed lady, who is with child, wants to know, O Brahmanas, though she is too shy to ask you directly ; would you please tell us, venerable sirs of unerring vision, what she will be shortly bringing forth ? She badly wants a son'. Thus hoaxed by them, the sages were angry, and they said, O King, 'She will bring forth, you fools, a pestle that shall destroy your race'. When they heard that, they were terrified ; uncovering Sāmba's belly in all haste, they were astounded to find an iron pestle. 'Alas ! What have we, luckless creatures, done ? What will the people say ?' Greatly perturbed by such thoughts, they went home, taking the pestle with them. They brought it to the King's audience hall, all the sprightliness drained out of their faces, and they told the King all about it, in

the presence of the assembled Yādavas. When they heard of the Brahmanas' curse, which could never fail of effect, and saw the pestle, the people of Dvārakā were bewildered and dismayed, O King. Ugrasena, the King of the Yadus, had the pestle ground to powder and the powder thrown into the sea along with the piece of metal that was left. A fish swallowed the shard. The powder was carried off by the waves and washed ashore; buried there, the iron particles grew into long and hard reeds. The fish was caught in a net with others by fishermen out fishing in the sea. The metal piece found in its belly was used by a fowler as an arrow-head. The exalted Lord, Who knows everything, had no mind to annul the Brahmanas' curse, though He could have done it. As Destroyer Time, He approved of it (10-24).

CHAPTER II

THE NINE YOGIS ON BHĀGAVATA-DHARMA

Sri Suka said: Nārada spent practically all his time in Dvārakā, which was under the protecting arm of Govinda, hungering for the worship of Krishna, O best of the Kurus. What mortal man in possession of his faculties would not, being beset by death on all sides, worship the lotus feet of Mukunda, fit object of devotion of the highest of the immortals, O King? Once, when the divine sage came on a visit to his home, Vasudeva received him with all honours; and when he was seated comfortably, prostrated himself before him and addressed him. Vasudeva said: 'Blessed One, your way-faring is for the good of all men, even as the coming of their parents is a benediction to children, and of those who show the way that leads to the illustrious Lord, a blessing to the lowly and the wretched. What the gods do may bring both happiness and misery to creatures; while nothing but happiness can result for them from what those like you, who have their being in Achyuta, do. The gods respond to the devotion of men in the spirit in which it is offered; like a man's shadow, they merely reflect his efforts. But good men lavish their love on the humble. While that is undoubtedly so, O Brahman,

I should like to ask you about those *dharma*s pertaining to the devotees of the Lord by which you propitiated Him, and by giving heed to which a man may be freed from that state wherein he is beset by fear on all sides. In days past I worshipped Ananta, Granter of release, not for liberation, but for progeny in this world, being taken in by His power of *Māyā*. Be pleased to instruct me, O blessed one of the rigorous vows, that I may, by your help, find easy release forthwith from that condition (*samsāra*) in which a man is assailed by every kind of sorrow and beset by peril on every side' (1-9).

Srī Suka said : When the sagacious Vasudeva thus questioned him, the divine sage was pleased ; put in mind of Hari by the mention of His glorious qualities, he thus answered him. Nārada said : ' You do well, O Chief of the Sātvatas, to ask about the *dharma*s of the Lord's devotees, since they purify all that exists¹. The *dharma* of the saintly, whether one hears it expounded or learns it by study, meditates upon it, receives it with faith, or commends it in another, instantly purifies him, even if he should be the enemy of the gods and of all things living. Thanks to you I have this day been put in mind of the Lord Nārāyana, from Whom all blessings flow, and to speak and hear of Whom is holy (10-13).

'There is a legend that has a bearing on your question. It speaks of a colloquy between the great-souled King of the Videhas (Janaka) and the sons of R̥shabha. To Priyavrata, the son of Svāyambhuva Manu, was born Āgnīdhra. He begot Nābhi. The famed R̥shabha was Nābhi's son. He was reputed to be an *amśa* of Vāsudeva, incarnate for propagating the *dharma*s that lead to liberation. He had a hundred sons who mastered all the Vedas. The eldest of them was Bharata, who was devoted to Nārāyana ; it is by his name that this wonderful continent is known to fame as Bhārata. Renouncing the empire of the earth, after he had enjoyed it for long years, he left home and attained Hari in the course of three lives by worshipping Him, through the practice of austerities and meditation. Nine of the others ruled over the nine divisions of the terrestrial regions situated round Bhāratavarsha. Eighty-one be-

¹ R. 'since they confer all blessings'.

came Brahmanas who propagated the way of works. Nine were blessed contemplatives, who figured out the supreme end of life. Having laboured long in the quest, these naked ascetics had become adepts in the science of the Self. They—Kavi, Hari, Antariksha, Prabuddha, Pippalāyana, Āvirhotra, Drumila, Chamasa and Karabhājana—looked upon the entire universe of gross and subtle objects as the Form of the exalted Lord, and as not different from their own Self. Free from all attachments, they went about as they pleased, with none to bar their chosen way, in the worlds of the gods and of the Siddhas, the Sādhyas, the Gandharvas and the Yakshas, the world of men and the regions of the Kinnaras, the Nāgas, the *ṛshis*, the Chāraṇas, the lords of the elementals and the Vidyādharas, the worlds of the birds and of cattle (14-23).

“Once they came by chance to the sacrificial session in Bhāratavarsha (then known as Ajanābha) which the sages were conducting for the great-souled Nimi. On seeing those exalted devotees of the Lord, who shone like the sun, the sacrificer, the fires and the priests all rose of one accord, O King, to receive them. Knowing them to be devoted heart and soul to Narayana, the King of the Videhas was delighted; he offered them seats, and honoured them fittingly. Bowing down to them in all humility, the pleased King respectfully questioned the nine, who shone by their own effulgence and were the peers of the sons of Brahmā. The King of the Videhas said: “I look upon you as verily the divine attendants of the exalted Lord, the Foe of Madhu Himself; for Vishnu’s devotees move about the worlds to sanctify them. It is no easy thing for the *jīva* to acquire a human body, fragile and transient as it is; and to my mind it is even more difficult in this life to obtain a glimpse of those who are dear to the Lord of Vaikuntha. Therefore, O flawless ones, I shuld like to know from you what is the universal good. For those who are caught up in the world, it is untold treasure to have the company of the good, even if it be for a moment. Be pleased to tell us of the *dharma*s pertaining to the devotees of the Lord, if you deem us fit to hear; those *dharma*s which are pleasing to Him Who knows no birth and incline Him

to give even Himself to those who seek refuge in Him” (24-31).

Nārada said : When Nimi said this, those exceedingly great ones were pleased ; and they praised him, and answered his questions, the King, the assembly and the priests listening attentively. Kavi said : ‘ I hold that by worship offered to the lotus feet of Achyuta, where no cause of fear from any quarter dare show its head, the man caught up in *samsāra*, his mind ever afflicted by reason of his identifying his body with the Self, is totally freed from fear. Know that those are to be regarded as the *dharma*s incumbent on the devotees of the Lord, which He himself taught so that even the ignorant could easily realize the Self. He who follows them, O King, will never be held up by obstacles, nor will he slip and fall, even if he should break into a run with eyes closed. Whatever a man does with his body, speech, mind, senses intellect, or will, or following his natural impulses, he should dedicate to the Supreme Lord Narayana. The man who turns his face away from the Lord, Who is his own Self, cannot realize the truth of Him because of His Power of *Māyā*; he confounds the Self with the body, and from this intense attachment to a “ second ” (something other than the Self) comes fear. Therefore the wise man should worship the Supreme Lord with an undeviating devotion, while at the same time looking upon his Guru as his God and dear to him as his own Self. The world of multiplicity, though in fact unreal, is conjured up by the mind of man, even as dreams and reveries are. So the sensible man should restrain the mind, which is always purposing ends to itself and debating them ; when that is done, he will win freedom from fear. Having put away all desires, let him go about as the spirit leads him, hearing the auspicious tales of the incarnations and exploits of the Wielder of the Discus and singing without false shame His names that point to those world-renowned births and deeds. Thus occupied, he comes to love the Lord intensely, from incessant repetition of the name of Him Who is dear to him ; and his heart melts within him ; he laughs aloud, he weeps, he cries out to Him, he sings at the top of his voice and dances like one possessed, wholly oblivious of the world.

Having in his heart no room for any other love, he will look upon *ākāśa*, air, fire, water and earth, the celestial bodies, all living beings, the four quarters, trees and the like, the rivers and the seas, all that exists, in fact, as the body of Hari, and bow low to them in reverence. When a man worships the Supreme Lord with his whole heart, he feels three things at once—intense love for Him, awareness of His immediate presence, and a profound indifference to all other things; just as with the eater every mouthful he takes brings more satisfaction, more nourishment to the body and corresponding abatement of hunger. The devotee of the Lord, thus engaged constantly in the worship of Achyuta's feet, comes to love Him with a great love; he turns away from the world and lives in the presence of the Lord; and that brings him surpassing peace, O King' (32-43).

The King requested, 'Please tell us of the Bhāgavata (devotee of the Lord), of the *Dharma* in which he is perfect, the manner of man he is, how he lives, what he says, by virtue of what qualities he becomes dear to the Lord' (44).

Hari answered: 'He who sees his Self as the Brahma present in all creatures, and sees all creatures grounded in his Self as the Brahma, is the highest among the devotees of the Lord. He who feels consuming love for the Supreme Lord, friendliness towards those who put their trust in Him, and pity for the ignorant, while he ignores those who hate Him, is a devotee of the second rank¹. He who zealously offers worship to the image of Hari, but does not worship Him in His devotees or others, is a novice in devotion. He who feels neither love nor hate, even when he experiences the objects of the senses, because He looks upon the world as the work of Vishnu's *Māyā*, is truly the best of Bhāgavatas. He who, because his mind ever dwells on Hari, is not overwhelmed by the incidents of the transmigratory existence—the body's birth and death, the hunger and thirst that plague the vital life, the mind's fears, the desires that distract the intellect, the weariness of the senses—he indeed is the foremost of Bhāgavatas. He who is so secure in his faith in Vāsudeva that his mind is never troubled by

¹ Because he still labours under the sense of difference.

desire, impulse to activity, or the residual impressions of *karma*, is the first of Bhāgavatas. He indeed is dear to Hari, who does not cling to the body with egoistic attachment because of his birth into a good family, the good works he has done, or the fact that he belongs to a higher *varṇa*, *āśrama*, or caste. He is the best of devotees, who makes no distinction between himself and others in regard to the body or the world's goods, who is equable in his attitude towards all beings and is at peace with himself. He is the highest among the devotees of Vishnu who, with his ever-fresh memory of the lotus feet of the Lord, will not, even to win the empire of the three worlds, give up for a moment his ecstatic contemplation of those feet, which the gods and others who live wholly in thoughts of the Invincible are still seeking. When all passion has been allayed in the heart of the worshipper by the gentle radiance of the gem-like toe-nails in those feet of the Lord that encompassed the world, how can it prevail again, any more than the sun's scorching heat can be felt when the moon is risen? The man whom all the world knows as the foremost of the Lord's devotees is he from whose heart Hari, Who dispels the spate of sins of him who so much as names Him absent-mindedly, will never depart, since His lotus feet are held by the silken cord of love' (44-55).

CHAPTER III

THE YOGIS ON MĀYĀ AND KARMA

The King prayed, 'We are eager to know about the Māyā of the transcendent Lord Vishnu that confounds even those who take in all the world; be pleased, blessed sirs, to enlighten us. Burnt by the devouring fire of *samsāra* and doomed to die, I feel I can never have enough of that nectar, the story of Hari, anodyne for that pain, which I have been drinking in as it flows from your lips' (1-2).

Antariksha said: 'That is the power of Māyā of the Primordial Lord, O you of the mighty arm, with which He, the Origin of all beings, created out of the gross elements all creatures, high and low, so that they, who are His fractions, may enjoy the objects of the senses and

obtain liberation in due course. Entering the bodies, thus composed of the five elements, He delights in providing the *jīva*, who has differentiated in himself the mind and the ten external organs, with the objects of enjoyment. The *jīva*, experiencing the objective universe through the senses activated by the Inner Ruler, comes to regard the body as the Self and becomes attached to it and to all other objects of enjoyment. Doing by the organs of action works which are the consequence of the residual impressions of *karmas* done in past lives, and reaping their fruits, which are of a mixed character, being both pleasureable and painful, he wanders in the maze of the transmigratory life, burdened with the body. The *jīva* thus goes the way of his *karma*, experiencing many miseries and submitting perforce to birth and death again and again until the time of the Great Dissolution (3-7).

‘When the gross elements are due for destruction, time that knows neither beginning nor end pulls the world of effects, consisting of substances and qualities, towards the Unmanifest (Prakṛti). Then there falls a terrible drought on earth lasting for a hundred years; and the sun, its heat extraordinarily intensified for the nonce, shrivels up the three worlds. The fire from the mouth of Sankarshaṇa, starting from the bottom of the nether world, sends up shooting tongues of flame which, fanned by the wind, consumes every thing all around. The massed clouds of the Deluge start pouring, and go on for a hundred years, the rain coming down in spouts as thick as an elephant’s trunk; and the cosmos is submerged in the spate of waters. Thereupon the Virāt Puruṣa (Brahmā) Who, denuded of His body, the cosmos, is like fire without fuel, merges in the Unmanifest¹, O King. The earth denuded of smell by the wind of the Dissolution, turns into water. And water, robbed of its fluidity² by the same wind, turns into fire. Fire, losing its colour to the darkness of the Dissolution, is merged in air, and air, losing its distinctive quality of tangibility to *ākāśa*, is merged in it. And *ākāśa*, deprived

¹ S. (alt.) the Brahma. ² ‘rasa’: (lit.) ‘flavour’ or ‘taste’. ‘Moisture’, ‘fluidity’ etc. may also, according to the context, be implied by it.

of its specific property, sound, by the Supreme Lord, Who stands forth as time that dissipates sound, is merged in the *tāmasic* aspect of the ego. The senses and the intellect on the one hand, and the mind and the gods on the other, are merged in the *rājasic* and *sāttvic* aspects respectively of the ego. The (threefold) ego in its turn merges with its effects in the Mahat. Now that we have described the Lord's Power of Māyā with its three *guṇas*, which is the cause of the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, is there anything else that we could tell you?' (8-16).

The King said: 'Be pleased to tell us, great sage, how men, who are apt to confound the body with the Self, may yet easily transcend this Power of Māyā of the Supreme Lord, which those who have not learnt to control the mind find well-nigh irresistible' (17).

Prabuddha answered: 'One should ponder over the fact that while those who enter into matrimony engage in works in the hope of abolishing sorrow and securing happiness, the result is the contrary. What pleasure can one have in wealth, which brings perpetual harassment, is so hard to get and so deadly in its effects on one, or in transient and perishable possessions, like houses and children, friends and cattle, earned by doing work? One should realize that the other world¹ is equally fleeting in character, being the product of *karma*, and precarious because of the existence of equals and superiors,² and the prospect of destruction, as in the case of petty principalities (18-20).

'Therefore he who would know the supreme good should resort to a Guru, who is well versed in the Veda and has realized the Brahma, thus winning tranquillity. Living under the tutelage of the Guru, whom he should look upon as his own soul and his God, and rendering him service, he should learn the Bhāgavata *dharma*s, whereby he may please Hari, Who in truth is his own soul, and Who gives Himself to His devotees. He should learn to cultivate non-attachment towards all things, while seeking the company of the good at the beginning of his pupilage, and should display true compassion,

¹ i.e., the enjoyments there which he has won by his meritorious deeds here. ² Who excite in one fear of rivalry, jealousy and strife.

loving kindness and humility¹, as the occasion calls for, in his contacts with his fellow-creatures. He should study to cleanse himself of impurities, to practise austerities, show forbearance, and avoid unnecessary speech. He should learn the Veda, be straightforward in his dealings, and live continently. He should refrain from causing hurt or injury to any creature, and should conduct himself with unruffled equanimity, confronted by the pairs of opposites. Leading a solitary life and avoiding attachments, he should learn to see the Self (as the Intelligent Reality) and the Sovereign Lord (as the Inner Controller) present in all existents. His attire should be of clean tree-bark,² and he should be content with whatever he gets. He should devote himself with fervour to the study of the scriptures that inculcate love of the Lord, while saying nothing by way of dispraise of others. He should learn to curb mind, speech and activity, to speak the truth and to restrain the feelings and the play of the senses. He should avidly hear and speak the praises of, and meditate on the incarnations and glorious qualities of Hari of the marvellous deeds, and should train himself to perform all *karmas* only for His sake. He should learn to dedicate to the Supreme Lord the sacrifices he offers, the gifts he makes, the penance he performs, the *japas* he practises, the virtuous life he leads, and the things that he specially likes, and to put to His service his wife and children, his home, his life itself. He should learn to love those over whom Krishna reigns as the sovereign Lord of their hearts, and to do loving service to both orders of being, to men in particular, and more especially to the good and the great. With His devotees he should join in regaling each other with the tales of the glorious deeds of the Lord that sanctify, delighting in such exchange and deriving from its deep satisfaction and freedom from sorrow. Thinking all the time of Hari, Who destroys the multitude of sins, and reminding each other of His glory, their bodies thrill with the love that devotion brings. They weep as their minds run on Achyuta; anon they

¹ That is, when he comes into contact with inferiors, equals or superiors, as the case may be. ² (*alt.*) rags found in unpeopled places.

laugh ; they rejoice in Him and utter words that the world must find strange; they sing and dance and re-enact the sports of Him Who knows no birth ; and when they find the Supreme in their hearts, fall silent, well content. Training himself thus in the pursuit of devotion, and depending wholly on Narayana, he easily passes beyond the sway of that Māyā which it is so hard to escape, by the power of love that the practice of devotion brings' (21-33).

The King begged : ' Be pleased to enlighten us on the essential nature of the Brahma, Supreme Spirit, to Whom the appellation Narayana is given. You are foremost among those who have realized the Brahma' (34).

Pippalāyana answered : ' Know that That is the One Reality¹, O King, Which is the causeless Cause of the preservation, creation and dissolution of the universe ; Which abides as the sole Existent through all the three states of waking, dream and sleep, as well in other states (such as *samādhi*) ; and Which animates the body, the organs, the vital airs and the mind to do their work. The mind cannot comprehend It, neither can speech, eye or intellect, the vital breath or the organs grasp It, any more than the sparks can light up (or burn) their parent fire. While the Veda testifies to the Ātman, it does so only by implication, as when it disclaims any ability to set It forth (in so many words), a disclaimer that would be meaningless if the Brahma were not a positive fact. It is the Brahma that by Its infinite power (Māyā) appears as the entire world of cause and effect, being their Cause. That (Brahma), Which alone was at the beginning, comes to be spoken of as the Pradhāna of the three parts, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* ; then, successively, as the Sūtrātmā, as the Mahat, and as the ego. The Brahma, again, manifests Itself as the gods who mediate knowledge, as the organs, as the objects thereof, and the experiences they bring. The Brahma knows neither birth nor death, It neither waxes nor wanes ; It is the Contemporary Witness of all states of change. It is pure consciousness, eternal and

¹ ' Which is known as Narayana (Bhagavān), the Brahma, and the Paramātmā, respectively in Its three different aspects described in this verse' (S.)

all-pervasive, the One Existent Which is represented as manifold by the specific powers of the different senses, being in this respect like the life-principle in all creatures. Thus life is the concomitant of the *jīvā* in all beings, whether hatched from eggs, or delivered from the womb, whether propagated like trees, or of indeterminate origin¹. In the same way, when in sleep the senses are quiescent and the ego is sunk (in nescience), there remains only the changeless *Ātman*, free from the limiting adjunct²; and we retain a clear recollection of It³. When the mind shall have washed itself clean of the impurities resulting from the *guṇas* and *karmas*, by the power of devotion that the yearning to reach the feet of Lord of the Lotus Navel stimulates, the truth of the Self will be directly perceived by that pure mind, as the sun is by eyes that are unclouded' (35-40).

The King prayed, 'Be pleased to instruct us in Karma Yoga, purified by which a man may quickly rid himself of the shackles of *karma* and attain in this very life the supreme knowledge that the cessation of works brings. I once asked the sages in my father's presence to enlighten me on this matter, but the sons of Brahmā made no reply; will you please tell me why?' (41-42).

Avirhotra answered: 'What should be done, what should not be done, and what is not done which should be done—these are matters that can be known only from the Veda, not from the usages of the world. As the Veda originated from *Īśvara*, even the learned are perplexed as to the import of such injunctions. The Veda, in teaching the ignorant, speaks indirectly and mystifyingly. Having the ultimate cessation of *karmā* in view, it prescribes *karma* for the ignorant, after the manner of those who administer medicine to children. If the man who has not subdued his senses, and who remains unenlightened, should be remiss in doing what the Veda ordains, he must go on from death to death, because of the sin of failing in his duty. But if he does disinterestedly what the Veda enjoins, dedicating the act to the Supreme Lord, he achieves the enlightenment

¹ 'Bred from sweat' (S.)
merged in the *jīva's avidyā*.
waking, 'I slept well'.

² The subtle body (which is then
³ As shown by the sleeper saying on

that comes with freedom from the sway of *karma*. The Veda speaks of the fruits of *karma* only to provide an incentive (43-46).

‘Let him who would quickly sever the knot in the heart of the *jīva*, who is in truth none other than the Supreme Spirit, also worship the Lord Keśava according to the mode prescribed in the Āgamas. Receiving the blessing of his preceptor, who will instruct him in the procedure, he should offer worship to the Mahāpuruṣa (Vishnu) in any image of His, which appeals to him. After his ablutions he should seat himself before the image or other representation of the Lord, and purifying his own body by the control of breath and other such means and safeguarding it by auspicious *nyāsas*, worship Hari with such offerings as he can command. Before commencing worship he should suitably prepare for it the materials, the place of worship, himself and the image. Then sprinkling the seat and making ready the vessels holding water for *pādya* and other rites, he should worship the Lord in his heart, then invoke His presence in the image; and commending himself to His protection with the *nyāsa mantras* relating to the heart and other parts of his body, and with the *mūla-mantra*, worship Him with that *mantra*. Uttering the *mūla-mantra* referring to that form of the Lord which he favours, he should offer worship to Him and to the different parts of His body, to His weapons and attendants, with *pādya*, *arghya*, and *āchamana*, with the ceremonial bath and the presentation of raiment, ornaments, scents, garlands, unbroken rice (for *tilak*), wreaths and incense, with the waving of lights and the offering of food. Having thus worshipped Him with all His adjuncts, as ordained, he should glorify Hari by singing hymns of praise and prostrate himself before Him. Thinking of himself as one in essence with Him, he should worship Hari in His image. Then placing on his own head the remnant of the offerings, he should restore Him, thus propitiated, to His place¹. He who worships in this wise the Supreme Lord, the Ātman, in the fire², in the sun, in the water,

¹ ‘The image to its receptacle, and the Lord to the heart of the worshipper’ (S.) ² These are the other visible representations of the Lord, wherein He may be worshipped, as in images of metal, wood, earth etc. See Ch. XXVII *infra* on Kriyāyoga.

and so on, as well as in the chance guest, and in his own heart, will surely be freed ere long' (47-55).

CHAPTER IV

THE YOGIS ON THE LORD'S INCARNATIONS

The King asked: 'Be pleased to tell us of those descents of Hari which He makes of His own free will, and the deeds done by Him in such incarnations, past, present and future' (1).

It was Drumila who answered: 'He must be a simpleton who hopes to enumerate the endless and glorious qualities of Ananta. Some one might possibly count, given sufficient time, the particles of dust on earth; he could never sum up the qualities of Him in Whom reside all powers. Nārāyaṇa, the Primordial Lord, obtained the name "Purusha", when He occupied, with an *aṁśa* of Himself, the cosmic egg which He had created with the five gross elements of His own creation. In that body of His are lodged the three worlds, from His organs derive both kinds of organs of all embodied souls. *Jñāna* is innate to Him, and from His vital breath all creatures draw their bodily strength, energy and power of action. He is the First Cause of the preservation, destruction and creation of the universe through *sattva* and the rest. He is the Primordial Purusha by Whose power of *rajas* the work of creation was effected, Brahmā appearing for this purpose; while Vishnu, the Lord of the sacrifice and the Protector of the twice-born and their *dharma*s, came into existence to carry on the work of preservation (by the power of His *sattva*), and Rudra, to compass the destruction of the universe by the power of His *tamas*. The endless stream of birth, life and death in which all creatures are involved thus issues from Him (2-5).

'It was He Who was born as the twins Nārāyaṇa and Nara to Dharma of Mūrti, daughter of Daksha. He, the first of sages, ever established in peace, taught by example and precept the way of Self-realization which is characterized by the cessation of all activities, and remains practising it to this day, while the foremost of

sages serve at His feet. Indra, labouring under the fear that He wished to supplant him, instigated against Him Kāma, supported by his whole host. And he, accompanied by a bevy of celestial nymphs, by the spring and gentle breezes, went to the hermitage known as Badari, and not knowing His greatness, assailed Him with the darts that are women's looks. Knowing it was Sakra's fault, He, the First of the gods, Who was wholly free from pride, told them with a laugh, as they stood trembling before Him, "Have no fears, O potent Kāma, and you, Wind-god and celestial damsels. Be pleased to accept our hospitality; let not this hermitage appear empty" (6-8).

'When He Who is the unfailing Sanctuary said this, O King, the gods answered the merciful One, hanging down their heads in shame, "This comes as no surprise to us from Thee, All-Powerful Lord That art beyond the reach of Māyā, and knowest no change, and at Whose lotus feet all heroic ones who delight in the Self bow their heads in reverence. Many are the impediments put by the gods in the way of Thy devotees, who pass beyond their world to go to Thy supreme Abode; but they offer no obstruction to him who pays them tribute in the form of sacrificial offerings. Thy devotee, however, having Thee for protector, plants his foot squarely on the head of obstacles. There are some who pass safely through the boundless seas that we are—we, hunger, thirst, the hardships of the seasons, the unkindness of the winds¹, the temptations of the palate and of sex—only to drown in a puddle no bigger than a cow's hoof by falling a prey to futile anger, throwing away the fruits of severe austerities" (9-11).

'While they were thus extolling Him, the Lord showed them women of a marvellous beauty who attended on Him, splendidly adorned. When they looked at those women, who were like Śrī incarnate, the attendants of the gods, eclipsed by that magnificent beauty, almost swooned under the fragrance they exuded. The Sovereign Lord of the gods told them with a smile, as they stood humbly before Him, "From among these women choose one who is your peer in beauty and who would

¹ 'The rigours of prāṇāyāma' (S's *alt.*)

be an ornament to heaven". Answering, "If such is Thy pleasure, O Lord", the minstrels of the gods did as He bid, and choosing Urvaśi, loveliest of the celestial nymphs, went back with her to the world of the gods. Making their prostrations to Indra, they told him before the assembled gods of Nārāyaṇa's puissance. Hearing what they said, Indra was amazed and scared (12-16).

'Vishnu, the Eternal, descending into this world for the welfare of all beings with fractions of Himself, as the swan, as Datta, as the eternally young boys, and as the blessed Ṛshabha, our father, taught the Yoga of the Self. In His incarnation as Hayagrīva, Slayer of Madhu, He recovered the Vedas. In His incarnation as the great Fish He saved Manu, the earth and plant-life from the Deluge. Incarnate as the Boar, He slew the son of Diti while lifting the earth out of the water. In the incarnation as the Tortoise, He bore the mountain on His back while the sea was being churned for nectar. He rescued from the jaws of the crocodile the royal tusker that cried out to Him in his distress. He saved the anchorities and sages who, fallen into the sea, were praising Him; and He released Indra, who had fallen into sin by slaying Vṛtra. He rescued the goddesses who lay immured and helpless in the home of the Asuras. Incarnate as the Man-lion, he slew the King of the Asuras and freed the good from fear. He slew the chiefs of the Asuras in the interests of the gods in the wars between them, and descending into this world with fractions of Himself, protected it in the various *Manvāntaras*. Appearing as Vāmana, He took away the dominion of the earth from Bali under the pretext of begging it of Him, and bestowed it on the sons of Aditi. Rama, the fire of the Bhṛguś that burnt up the Haihaya clan, denuded the earth of Kṣhatriyas thrice seven times. And He as Rama, consort of Sita, threw a bridge across the sea, and slew the Ten-headed (Ravana), who was established in Lankā. He reigns ever victorious, His glorious fame dispelling the sins of the world (17-21).

'In order to rid the earth of its burden, He Who knows no birth will appear among the Yadus and perform exploits impossible even to the gods. He (as Buddha) will confound by His casuistry those who offer

sacrifices without having the necessary fitness. And, at the end of the Kali Age, He (as Kalki) will destroy the Sūdras who have become Kings. Infinite are the incarnations and exploits, such as these that have been described, of the Lord of the universe, of Him of the limitless glory, O you of the mighty arm' (22-23).

CHAPTER V

THE SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF DEVOTION

The King then raised another question : ' There are those who rarely worship the exalted Lord Hari. To what end must these come, who not having learnt self-control, are plagued by endless desires ? Tell us, O you who are foremost among the knowers of the Self '(1).

Chamasa answered : ' From the mouth, arms, thighs and feet respectively of the Purusha were born the four *varṇas*, Brahmanas and the rest, formed by the *guṇas*, and separate from each other, along with the *āśramas*. Those among them who do not worship, and those who even despise the Supreme Lord, to Whom they owe their birth, fall from their position into hell. There are those who are far removed from any chance of hearing of the glories of Hari or seeing those who sing Achyuta's name ; for example, women, Sūdras and others. Those like you should have compassion for them. There are Brahmanas, Kshattriyas and Vaiśyas, who though they have approached close to the feet of Hari by virtue of their re-birth through Vedic sacraments, are bemused and misled by the eulogistic passages in the Veda exalting *karma*. Having no knowledge of the true inwardness of *karmas*, these ignorant persons, stuck-up pretenders to learning, are so carried away by such beguiling statements that they entertain themselves with pleasant fictions of the joys to come. Dominated by restless hankering, they purpose to themselves horrid ends. Lustful, vicious as the viper in temper, ostentatious and arrogant, these wicked men hold up to ridicule those who are dear to Achyuta. Those who make it their business in life to ingratiate themselves with women are never tired of talking to each other of their hopes and pleasures in the domestic life, in homes where the highest satisfaction to

be had is that of lust. They offer sacrifices without regard to the provision of food, the adoption of right procedure and the payment of adequate fees, and slaughter animals merely to make a living, not knowing what they do. These vicious men, whose understanding is dulled by pride in their wealth, power, high birth, learning, liberality; comeliness, strength, and good works, treat contemptuously the good men who are dear to Hari, as well as the Lord Himself. The stupid creatures do not heed Him Who is ever present in all beings as their own soul and as the Inner Ruler, though aloof and unattached even as the sky is; Who is the object of supreme love, and Whose glory is proclaimed by the Vedas. They stridently affirm that the real purpose of the Vedas is the satisfaction of desires. The craving for sex, flesh foods and strong drink is innate to every creature. Therefore there is no question of the Veda prescribing them. It has a rule, distinguishing the circumstances in which their use is allowed; these are the state of marital union, the offering of animal sacrifices, and the performance of a particular rite¹ where liquor figures, respectively. But it looks with favour on abstinence from these practices (2-11).

‘People spend on domestic pleasures the wealth which should be properly devoted wholly to the pursuit of Dharma, which brings knowledge, and enlightenment with its concomitant, the peace that passes understanding. These men do not see death with its endless power. As only smelling is prescribed in the case of the liquor, so the killing of an animal in the sacrifice alone is permitted, not cruelty. Likewise sexual union for progeny is countenanced, not indulgence for pleasure². That such is the pure duty enjoined upon them these men do not know. The evil men who do not know that such is the Dharma and are puffed up with pride, flattering themselves on their righteousness, slaughter animals without a qualm³; those animals eat them in hell (12-14).

‘Those who hate the Supreme Lord Hari, their own

¹ In the *Sautrāmaṇi* sacrifice. ² These are the restrictions and conditions to which the permissive rule referred to in the last para is subject. ³ ‘Without a qualm’: S. (*alt.*) ‘in the self-complacent belief that they were going to achieve their ambitions’.

soul, Who dwells in other bodies also, while clinging with passionate attachment to their own body, which is no better than a corpse, and to their connections, go to hell. Those who have not won the knowledge that liberates but who have passed out of the condition of total ignorance, pin their faith to the three ends of life, as if life were everlasting, and are the cause of their own undoing. Doing violence to the Self, they know no peace; engaged in the works of ignorance, they flatter themselves on their enlightenment; and when their daydreams are shattered by time, they fall into despair, having failed to achieve self-fulfilment. Leaving behind, all unwillingly, those things that they had been at such pains to acquire—a home, wife and children, friends power and wealth—they, who had turned their faces away from Vāsudeva, fall into the bottomless pit' (15-18).

The King then asked, 'What are the forms and complexions which the Lord assumes in different eras? Under what names do men worship Him then, and according to what modes? Be pleased to tell us' (19).

Karabhājana answered: 'In the Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali Ages, Keśava has different complexions, names and forms, and is worshipped in different ways. In Kṛta, He manifests Himself with a white complexion, with four arms and matted locks. He is clad in tree-bark and the skin of the antelope; he wears the sacred thread and carries rosary, staff and bowl. The men of that age are of a serene disposition. They bear no enmity to any creature; they are friendly to all and treat all alike. They propitiate the Lord by contemplation, controlling the mind and subduing the senses. The Lord is then known by various names, such as Hamsa, Suparṇa, Vaikuntha, Dharma, Yogeśvara, Amala, Īśvara, Puruṣa, Avyakta and Paramātmā. In the Tretā age He is of a sanguine complexion, with four arms, and wears a girdle of three strands. His hair is tawny. He is bodied forth by the sacrifice, and is distinguished by the ladle, the spoon and other sacrificial utensils He carries. The men of that age, who are in love with Dharma and devoted to the exposition of the Vedas, worship Him, the Lord Hari Who is All-the-gods, by performing the

rites prescribed in the Vedas. He is then spoken of as Vishnu, Yajna, Pṛṣṇigarbha, Sarva-deva, Urukrama, Vṛṣhākapi, Jayanta and Urugāya. In Dvāpara, the Lord is dark-complexioned, clad in yellow and armed with His own weapons. He carries on His person the distinctive marks, Śrīvatsa and the rest, and is adorned with the ornaments that are unique to Him. The men of that age, eager for direct vision of the Supreme, worship Him as surrounded with all the panoply of imperial power, according to the modes prescribed in the Vedas and the Āgamas. "We offer our adoration to Thee, Vāsudeva, and to Thee, Sankarshaṇa, and to you, Pradyumna and Aniruddha; Salutations to Thee, O exalted Lord! We pay our homage to Narayana, the sage, to the Almighty Spirit, to Him Who is the supreme Lord of the universe and the universe itself, and Who is the soul in all creatures". Thus, O Lord of the earth, do they extol the Lord of the universe in Dvāpara (20-31).

'In Kali, too, they worship Him according to the modes prescribed in various Āgamas; let me describe them. Men of enlightenment worship Him, Who is of a brilliant sapphire-blue in complexion, along with the different parts of His body, His ornaments, weapons and attendants, according to modes of worship in which the singing of His praises and the recital of His names play a predominant part. "O Mahāpurusha, Protector of Thy suppliants, I make my prostrations to Thy lotus feet, meet for constant meditation; they save one from all humiliations and bring the fruition of all desires; they are the fountain-head of the wells of purity. Siva and Brāhmā glorify them, the sanctuary where Thy humble servants' suffering ceases; they are the boat that ferries one across the ocean of *samsāra*. O Mahapurusha, Lover of Dharma, I make my prostrations to Thy lotus feet, which took Thee to the forest¹ at the bidding of Thy father, giving up without a moment's thought a magnificent kingdom such as the gods themselves might covet, and which none else could have brought himself to relinquish; and yet those feet hasted

¹ The reference here is to the incarnation as Rāma, son of Daśaratha.

in pursuit of the phantom deer, because Thy beloved wanted it' (32-34).

Thus the exalted Lord Hari, Dispenser of all blessings, is worshipped, O King, by the men of every age under names and forms special to that age. High-minded men, who have insight into the nature of the Kali age, and the discrimination to seize the essence, regard it highly, since then one may obtain all that one values most by simply singing the praises of the Lord and reciting His names. Greater gain than this there is none for men who wander in the maze of life, since thus they may know supreme peace and cessation of the travail of *samsāra* (35-37).

Men who live in the Kṛta and other ages long to be born into this world in Kālī, O King, for it is in Kālī that men who are wholly devoted to Narayana appear; they are to be found everywhere then, but in the Dravida country, O King, they are to be found in large numbers—there where flow the rivers Tāmraparṇī, Kṛtamālā, Payasvinī, the extremely sacred Kāveri and the great river¹ which flows towards the west. The men who drink of their waters, O Lord of men, become pure of heart, and most of them are devoted to the exalted Lord Keśava. He who, repudiating the notion of difference, throws himself on the mercy of Mukunda, the Haven of Refuge, is no longer the debtor and slave of the gods, the sages, the elementals, his own dependants, or his manes, O King. Hari, the Supreme Lord, paramount over all Powers, dwells in the heart of him who is dear to Him because he knows no other love and has cast himself at His feet; and He annuls such lapses as he may have somehow fallen into' (38-42).

Nārada said: 'The King of Mithilā, supremely pleased at having heard the *dharma*s of the devotees of the Lord expounded by them, joined with his preceptors and priests in honouring the sages, the sons of Jayanti. Those perfected ones thereupon vanished from sight, even as all the world was looking. The King, faithfully practising those *dharma*s, attained the supreme goal. You, too, O fortunate one, devoting yourself earnestly to these *dharma*s that you have just heard expounded, and renouncing all attachments, will reach the Supreme.

¹ The Vetravati (M.).

The world is filled with the fame of you two, since the exalted and supreme Lord Hari elected to be born as your son. Feasting your eyes on Krishna, embracing Him, talking with Him, putting Him to bed, seating Him on your lap and feeding Him, you lavished your parental affection on Him and thus sanctified yourselves. When the kings Siśupāla, Poundra, Sālva and the rest, because of the enmity they bore Him, thought constantly on Him, while lying down, or sitting still or doing anything whatsoever, their hearts were so captivated by His gait, His beguiling charm and His roving glance, as they pictured them to themselves, that these left an indelible impression on their minds and they were remade in His own image; what doubt then could there be that those who loved Him would thus be transfigured? Look not upon Krishna as your son. He is the All-soul, the Supreme Lord, Whose omnipotence is veiled by the delusive human exterior, Who is beyond all cause and effect, Who is eternal and unchanging. All over the world is spread the glory of the Lord Who came down to the earth for the slaying of the Asuras that burdened the earth, born into this world as Kshattriyas, and for the protection of the good and their liberation' (43-50).

Srī Suka said: Hearing this, the great Vasudeva was lost in wonder. And he and his fortunate wife Devaki shed all delusion. He who meditates with a collected mind on this true story, to hear which is holy, frees himself from error and becomes ripe for the realization of the Brahma in this very life (51-52).

CHAPTER VI

THE GODS WAIT ON SRĪ KRISHNA

Srī Suka resumed his narrative: Brahmā, accompanied by his sons, the gods and the Patriarchs, Bhava, Lord of the past and the future, followed by the bands of the elementals, the Lord Indra and the Maruts, the Ādityas and Vasus, the Āsvin twins, the Ṛbhus and the Āngirases, the Rudras and the 'All-Gods', the Sādhya, the Gandharvas and Apsarases, the Nāgas, the Siddhas, the Chāraṇas and Guhyakas, the sages and the

manes, as well as the Vidyādhara and the Kinnaras, all went in a body to Dvārakā, eager to see the Lord Krishna Who charmed the hearts of men with His beauty and spread His fame in the three worlds, and dispelled their sins. In that city of glittering opulence, they gazed upon Krishna of the marvellous beauty with eyes that knew no satiety. With flowers from the gardens of heaven they covered Him, the First of the Yadus, and they sang a song in praise of the Lord of the universe, with words cunningly wrought and pregnant with meaning (1-6).

The gods said : ' How blest we are, O Lord, that it should be given to us to cast ourselves down at Thy lotus feet, bringing to Thy adoration our intellect and our senses, the strength of the body, as well as mind and speech, when even those near-perfect souls that yearn for release from the powerful bonds of *karma* can only dwell upon them in loving meditation in the core of the heart ! By Thy Power of Māyā with its three *guṇas*, which are controlled and directed by Thee, Thou createst in Thyself the phenomenal world which is so inscrutable, and likewise dost preserve and destroy it ; and yet those acts are powerless to bind Thee, O Invincible, because, delighting as Thou dost in Thine own unclouded bliss, Thou art ever free from blemish¹. The hearts of men who harbour desires will not be cleansed, O First of the gods That art worthy of all praise, by meditation and study of the Vedas, by the giving of gifts, the practice of austerities and the performance of good works, as thoroughly as are those of the saintly by reason of their absorption in Thy glory, an absorption which is intensified by constantly hearing it sung. May Thy feet² burn like fire our instinctive desires—those feet which the sages who long for liberation contemplate in hearts melting with love, and which those of Thy devotees who desire equality in power with Thee worship in one of Thy four-fold manifestations, while others, who look up to Thee as their Master, worship them thrice a day from the firm resolve to pass

¹ Untainted by likes and dislikes. ² In this and the next four verses the text has uniformly 'foot' in the singular. In the first three the translation has 'feet' instead.

beyond the world of the gods. It is on those feet that the minds of the sacrificers dwell when they, holding the oblations in their joined hands, meditate, as the Veda enjoins, on the deity of the sacrifice as present in the sacrificial fire ; it is on them that the yogis concentrate their minds, moved by the desire to acquire the supernatural powers that inhere in Thee, when they practise the yoga whose end is Self-realization ; but Thy supreme devotees are content to worship them everywhere. May those feet of Thine, O Lord That acceptest, as the highest honour, the garland of wild flowers, old and faded though it is, of which the Goddess Sri is as jealous as of a rival wife, burn up the lurking desires in our hearts. May we who cleave to Thee be purified of our sins, O Lord That art everywhere, by that foot of Thine which was raised aloft in taking the three strides, like a victorious standard, with the triple stream¹ for banner, striking terror into the hearts of the Asura hordes and thrusting them into the nether world, while freeing the gods from fear and speeding them to heaven. May Thy foot be our salvation, O Spirit Supreme, That functionest as time and art above Purusha and Prakṛti ; all embodied souls, from Brahmā downwards, while they oppress each other, being controlled by Thee, as cattle are by the nose-cord (7-14).

‘Thou art the Cause of the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe ; they speak of Thee as the Controller of Prakṛti, Purusha, and Mahat. And Thou Thyself art the three-naved wheel of time revolving with secret speed for the destruction of all creatures ; thus Thou art Supreme Spirit. Deriving his power from Thee, the Purusha² with his inexhaustible virility, produces, in conjunction with Māyā, the Mahat, which may be likened to the foetus of the universe ; and the Mahat, enveloped by the same Māyā, brings forth the golden cosmic egg with its outer coverings. Thou, O Lord That rulest over the senses, art supreme over all things, stationary and moving, since Thou, while savouring the pleasures that the senses, which are prompted by Māyā, bring, remainest unattached ; whereas others

¹ The. Gangā ; (alt.) ‘the stream that flows through the three worlds’. ² ‘Jīva’ in the text.

go in fear of them, even if they have discarded them by an effort of will. How indeed can they touch Thee, Whose mind Thy sixteen thousand spouses could not disturb with the darts of Love strengthened by the coquetry of the brow that charmed with its inviting side-long glance and demure smile? The streams of Thy nectar-like fame and those other streams that carry the water that washed Thy feet have the power to wipe off the sins of the three worlds. Those who tread the path of virtue are devoted to both these sanctifying elements. They drink in with the ear Thy fame as it streams from the Veda, and lave in the waters that flow from Thy feet' (15-19).

The son of Bādarāyaṇa said: Praising Him thus, along with Iśa and the gods, Satadhṛiti prostrated himself before Govinda. And then he addressed Him again from where he had stationed himself in the air. Brahmā said: 'We prayed to Thee in days past, O Lord That art the soul in all things, to free the earth of its burden. That has now been done as we wished. Thou hast fortified the good and the truthful in their *dharma* and spread everywhere Thy Glory that destroys the sins of all the worlds. Incarnate among the Yadus with a body of unsurpassed beauty, Thou hast done deeds of irresistible valour for the good of the world. Good men living in the Kali Age, who hear them praised or themselves speak in praise of them, will easily pass beyond the darkness of ignorance, O Lord. It is now a hundred and twenty-five years since Thou, All-Highest, wert born into the family of the Yadus. Thou That art the Support of all that is, hast fulfilled all the purposes of the gods and left nothing undone; the family, too, has been as good as destroyed by the Brahmanas' curse. Come back to Thine own abode, if Thou wilt, to protect the worlds, and us, their Guardians and Thy servants, O Lord of Vaikuntha' (20-27).

The Lord answered: 'I have Myself considered all these matters that you have spoken of, O Lord of the gods. Your work has been done; the earth has been freed of its burden. I have been restraining, as the shores contain the sea, this Yādava race, which would have seized the world, puffed up as it is with the pride

of opulence that goes with strength and valour. If I should go away without suppressing the proud Yadus, the world might perish at the hands of this people, who would break all bounds. Its destruction has started with the Brahmanas' curse ; when it is completed, I shall go to your abode, O Brahman, flawless One' (28-31).

Śrī Suka said : Thus told by the Master of the universe, the great god, the Self-existent, prostrated himself before Him and returned with the celestials to his abode. Then the Lord, taking note of the dire portents that appeared in Dvārakā, spoke thus to the assembled Yādava elders. The Lord said : 'These are fearful portents that are occurring everywhere about us ; and our race has incurred the curse of the Brahmanas, which there is no escaping. If we would live, we should not remain here, worthy sirs ; let us leave this very day for the sacred Prabhāsa, and not delay. It was by bathing there that the moon, who had fallen into a decline because of Daksha's curse, was instantly purged of his sin and regained his fullness. We shall bathe in the waters there, pour libations to the manes and the gods, give amiable Brahmanas rich and varied fare, and with all faith make large gifts to those worthy folk, which would be like sowing in fruitful soil. Doing that, we shall get over our fearful plight, as men cross the ocean by means of ships.' Śrī Suka said : Thus advised by the exalted Lord, the Yādavas resolved, O Delight of your race, to go on the pilgrimage, and yoked their chariots (32-39).

Uddhava, the constant and faithful follower of Krishna, had heard what the Lord said, and noticed the baleful portents ; and when he saw the preparations that were being made, he met the Lord privately, and touching the feet of the Overlord of all the worlds, spoke to Him with folded hands, O King (40-41).

Uddhava said : 'O Paramount Lord of the gods, Master of Yoga, to hear and sing Whose praises is holy, it is clear that Thou art going to depart this world after destroying this race, since Thou has not annulled the Brahmanas' curse when Thou couldst have done it, being the all-powerful Lord. I cannot bear, O Keśava, to be parted from Thy lotus feet even for a second ;

take me, too, with Thee, O Lord, to Thy home. The man who has relished the tale of Thy pastimes, which falls on the ear like nectar and comes to men as the supreme blessing, sheds all other desires. How can we, Thy devotees, having waited on Thee always, whatever Thou wert doing—lying down or sitting, moving about or occupying Thy place in the audience hall, bathing, amusing Thyself, taking food—now tear ourselves away from Thee, the Beloved, our own soul? Having decked ourselves with the garlands, scents, raiment and jewels that Thou hadst used, and partaken of the remnants after Thou hadst fed, we, Thy slaves, should without a doubt be always able to overcome Thy Māyā. The sages clad with the wind win peace by practising austerities and sublimating sex; thus purified by their strenuous endeavours, they renounce the world and reach Thy abode known as the Brahma. But we, O Master-yogi, wander though we may in the maze of works in this world, shall pass beyond the abysmal darkness by keeping company with Thy devotees and talking of Thee, fondly remembering and rehearsing Thy sayings and doings, Thy gait and Thy smile, Thy look and badinage, what time Thou playedst Thy assumed role in the world of men' (42-49).

Srī Suka said: Thus besought by him, the exalted Lord, the Son of Dēvaki, comforted Uddhava, the beloved devotee, who gave Him all his love, O King (50).

CHAPTER VII

THE STORY OF THE NAKED ASCETIC

Srī Suka said: The exalted Lord told him, 'It is even as you say. That is what in fact I intend doing, O blessed one. Brahmā, Bhava and the Guardians of the worlds are anxious to have Me back in Vaikuntha. I have done My work for the gods here; that was what I came into this world for, with an *amśa* of myself, at the request of Brahmā. This race has been already burnt up by the curse, and is going to perish by mutual strife. Seven days from now this city will be submerged by the ocean. The moment I leave, the world will forfeit its good fortune, and it will not be long before it comes

completely under the sway of Kali, my good friend. When I have departed from this world, you should not remain here for a moment. In the Kali Age men become addicted to unrighteousness. Renouncing all attachments to kinsmen and relations, go where you please, with your mind intent on Me, and looking on all with an equal eye. You must understand that the world is an illusion produced by the mind, since it is apprehended by mind and speech, by the eyes, ears and so on, and is, besides, perishable. The man of unsteady mind falls into the error of seeing multiplicity. It is that error that produces the notions of good and evil. It is for the man who entertains these notions that the ordinances dealing with the performance of enjoined duty, failure in that duty, and the doing of what is prohibited, are valid. Therefore, keeping your senses under control and the mind steady, you should learn to look on the world as an illusion projected on your own soul, and on your soul as but Me, the Supreme Lord. Having attained certainty as to the real purport of the Veda, and gained direct knowledge by experience, you will be supremely content in the realization of the Self, and then, being one with the soul in all creatures, you will no longer be frustrated by obstacles. If the man who has outgrown the ideas of good and evil, desists from what is prohibited, it is not because he considers it wrong; likewise if he does what is enjoined, it is not from the notion that it is right; in either case he acts as the child does. Fortified by knowledge and enlightenment, he has realized that the universe is of one substance with Me. There is peace in his heart and goodwill for all creatures; for him there will be no more fall' (1-12).

Srī Suka said: Thus instructed by the exalted Lord, Uddhava, the great devotee, prostrated himself before Him, O King, and, anxious to plumb the truth of things, again addressed himself to Achyuta (13).

Uddhava said: 'O Lord That art the Dispenser of the fruits of yoga, as well as That with Which the yogi seeks union¹, That manifestest Thyself in yoga, and

¹ 'That... in yoga': S. suggests *alts.* for both; for the first, 'He whom the yogi treasures as a cherished secret possession'; for the next, 'He who is of the essence of yoga'.

grantest easy fulfilment in it, Thou preacheest to me the total renunciation of *sannyāsa* for the attainment of the supreme goal. This renunciation of desires is very hard for those whose minds are addicted to the pleasures of the senses, much more so, I am sure, for those who have no devotion to Thee, O Lord That art present in all beings. I am a silly creature, head over ears in love with the body, which is the work of Thy Māyā, and its affiliates, and I entertain notions of "me" and "mine" in regard to them. Instruct me so, O Lord, that Thy servant may easily put into practice what Thou hast taught. I can think of none, not even among the gods, but Thee, to whom knowledge is innate, to enlighten me on the Ātman, the Ever-true. All of them, from Brahmā downwards, burdened with the body, are confounded by Thy Māyā and look upon the objective world as real. Therefore, O Lord, oppressed by many sorrows and disgusted with the world, I seek refuge in Thee, Nārāyaṇa, Companion of Nara, That art flawless perfection, boundless existence, the source of all knowledge and all power, Whose home is the eternal Vaikuntha' (14-18).

The Lord answered: There are to be found men here and there, who are skilled in probing into the truth of things, and are able to lift themselves up by their own unaided efforts out of the slough of instinctive desires. Every creature is his own best instructor, much more so man, since he can ascertain by direct perception and inference what is truly good for him. Those men who have subdued the senses and acquired discriminating knowledge and are devoted to the worship of the Lord by means of yoga, see Me most vividly in the human body, as present therein endowed with all powers. There are many bodies, created before man's, having one, two, three, four, or many legs, or no legs at all; but of all of them I love the human body best. Men who cultivate awareness look for Me, the Supreme Lord, (Who am different from what can be grasped by the senses), directly in the human body, by presumption¹.

¹ 'By presumption...': This is done in two ways, first from the observed fact that the *buddhi* and other faculties have intelligence, which can be explained only on the ground that they, though themselves inert, are activated by a Power other than they;

based on the intelligence that those faculties, themselves material, display, and by inference from the end they serve (19-23).

Bearing upon these matters there is an old legend relating a conversation between an ascetic who had renounced all worldly obligations and the extremely powerful Yadu. Happening to meet a youthful Brahmana ascetic, who displayed a rare power of insight and lived a carefree life, Yadu, who was well versed in all that pertains to Dharma, questioned him respectfully. Yadu asked him, 'How did you, O Brahman, come to gain this clear insight into things, while refraining from all activity, as a consequence of which you, with all your knowledge, live like a child? Most men engage in the pursuit of Dharma, Artha and Kāma and in the inquiry into the Self, prompted by an end in view, the achievement of long life, fame, wealth, and so on. You have ability, knowledge and skill, you have good looks and are an enchanting talker, and yet you do nothing and want nothing, behaving as idiots and madmen do, and those who are spirit-possessed. When all men are being consumed by the forest fire of lust and greed, you seem to suffer no more than the elephant which has escaped from the fire and plunged into the waters of the Gangā. Tell us, who are eager to know, how you find such delight in the Self, you who are bereft of the pleasures of the senses and live a lonely life' (24-31).

The Lord went on: Thus questioned by the sagacious Yadu, who was devoted to Brahmanas, and had a keen understanding, the great Brahmana was pleased with his courteous words and thus answered him, as he stood before him, inclining his head in all humility. The Brahmana said: 'I have many teachers, O King, from whom I have learnt, using my intelligence; following their example, I am free from attachments, and I go about as I please. Let me tell you of them. The earth, air, sky, water, fire, the moon and the sun, a certain dove, the python, the sea, the moth, the honey-bee, the

secondly, from the fact that they function purposefully, it is inferred that they must be the agents of a Power whose purposes they serve.

elephant, the honey-fly, the antelope, the fish, one Pingalā, an osprey, a child, a maiden, an artificer of arrows, the serpent, the spider, and the wasp—those were the twenty-four preceptors, O King, to whom I went; from the way they lived, I taught myself what I had to know. What I learnt, and from whom, and how, I shall tell you, O son of Yayāti, best of men; listen (32-36).

Knowing that all creatures are subject to the will of Providence, one should not deviate from the right path, however much one might suffer at their hands; this rule of life, I learnt from the earth. From the mountain the good man should learn to labour continually for the benefit of others and to live wholly for their sake; and from the tree, to put himself without question into the hands of others. The sage should be content to subsist even as the life-breath does, and should not hanker after the pleasures of the senses; living thus, he may retain his capacity for knowledge and yet preserve his mind and speech from distraction. The yogi, having discarded the notions of 'good' and 'bad', though experiencing the objects of the senses in all their diversity, is no more addicted to them than the wind to the places where it happens to blow. The yogi who has realized the Self, though he seems to identify himself with the properties of the material body that he tenants, is no more attached to them than the breeze to the pleasant smells it carries. Even while remaining in the body, the sage should think of his soul as unattached to the body and the like, and unlimited, just as the sky is, not only because it is present in all nature, animate and inanimate, as the invariable concomitant, but, being identical with the *Brahma*, it is also all-pervading. The *Ātman* is no more affected by the body and the like, which are the products of time and are composed of fire, water and earth, than the sky is by the clouds that are blown across it by the wind. Pure and kind-hearted by nature, and sweet-spoken, the sage is like water, in that he is a sanctifying influence in the lives of men, who purify themselves by seeing, touching or speaking of him. Radiating power enhanced by austerities, possessing nothing, yet imperturbable, the man who has steadied his mind

remains unsoiled like the fire, regardless of what he may eat. Sometimes hidden from view, sometimes out in the open, he to whom all who desire their own good should give their devotion, eats wherever he is offered food, burning up the sins of the giver, those that he has already incurred or those that he might yet incur. The *Ātman*, all-pervading in truth, having entered the body, good or bad, created by its own nescience, assumes its form, as fire does that of the log which it burns (37-47).

All changes from the cradle to the grave concern the body, not the soul, being brought about, as in the case of the digits of the moon, by time whose operations are imperceptible. While the creation and destruction of the bodies that the *Ātman* takes, goes on every moment at the hands of time, which rushes like a swift stream, it remains un-noticed, like the emergence and subsidence of tongues of flame in a burning fire. The man who has steadied his mind enjoys the pleasures of the senses without attachment, renouncing them at the proper time, as the sun draws water through its rays and discharges it. The *Ātman*, in its essence, is not manifold, but when reflected in limiting adjuncts, it appears to men who lack insight as if it had entered them and were many and various ; in these respects it is like the sun (48-51).

A man should not dote upon or cling to anything ; if he does, he will, like the distressed dove, come to know anguish. A certain dove built its nest in a great forest tree and lived in it with its mate for a number of years. The pair enjoyed connubial bliss, their hearts knit by the bonds of love, eyes clinging to eyes, body to body, mind to mind. They lived in the woodlands a carefree life, always inseparable, whether lying down or sitting on their perch, moving about or standing still, cooing, playing or feeding. Not having learnt to control his senses, the male bird had a great tenderness for her, O King, because she gave him the highest satisfaction, and he got her whatever she wanted, even if it could be done only with great difficulty. The faithful female bird conceived, and at the proper time laid eggs in the nest in her spouse's presence. From them were hatched in due course, thanks to the mysterious powers

of Hari, chicks that were fully developed in every limb, with soft bodies and fluffy feathers. The pair, who doted on their offspring, took pleasure in nourishing them; and hearing their first indistinct twitterings, their hearts were full. The parent birds went into raptures over their feathers, so smooth to the touch, their calls and childish gambols and their delight in running forth to meet them. Deluded by Vishnu's Māyā, they clung to each other with passionate attachment and brought up their young offspring with timorous hearts (52-61).

Having the care of a family, they once went out into the woods to gather food for them and tarried long. A fowler in the forest, happening to see the chicks running about near their nest, spread his net and caught them. The male and female birds, which had gone out in their perpetual anxiety to keep their young well fed, returned to the nest with food. On seeing her young hemmed in by the net and crying, the mother-bird rushed to them, wailing in agony; when she found that they were held fast, she whose heart was bound with the numberless cords of love, thanks to the Māyā of the Lord That knows no birth, was in despair, and all unheeding, was caught in the net (52-66).

The male bird, seeing his young, dearer to him than life, and his worthy mate, taken captive, was broken-hearted; and inconsolable in his grief, he lamented, 'Alas! look at my evil plight; luckless and foolish, I am unsatisfied with the pleasures I have enjoyed, and I have not secured my welfare in the life hereafter; and now my home, which should subserve the three ends of life, lies in ruins about me. If she, my perfect mate, who was so devoted to me, looking upon her husband as her god, goes to heaven with her innocent young, leaving me in my desolate home, what should I, miserable creature, do in that empty house, with my wife and children gone? And what should I go on living for, widowed and eating out my heart in grief?' And though he saw with his own eyes all of them caught in the jaws of death, and struggling, the foolish creature hurled himself in his misery into the net. And the cruel fowler, having thus got the domesticated dove, its mate and

chicks, went home well satisfied. The family man who has not achieved inner peace, who delights in the uxorious life like that bird, leads a miserable existence trying to support his family, he and his dependants having to undergo considerable hardships. He who, having gained entry into the world of men, which opens the door to release, remains stuck fast in house and home like that bird, is spoken of as one who had climbed only to fall (67-74).

CHAPTER VIII

THE ASCETIC'S STORY CONTINUED

The Brahmana continued : All creatures find happiness in heaven and hell alike, O King, even as they find misery ; so he who is wise will not hanker after it. Living like the python, inactive, he should swallow such food as falls to him, be it delicious or tasteless, much or little. If none comes his way, let him go without food for days together like the giant adder, lying still, doing nothing, and hoping to feed when it shall please Providence. With a body inactive, though possessed of energy, strength and mental power, let him lie still, but sleepless¹. Let him make no effort whatsoever, though possessing all his faculties in their fullest vigour. The sage should be like the sea that is stilled, calm and deep, unfathomable, inviolable, limitless, unperturbed. Putting his trust in Nārāyaṇa, the sage should be neither exalted by abundance nor depressed by want, any more than the sea is swollen by the streams or shrunk without them (1-6).

The man who has not subdued his senses succumbs to the arts of woman, the enchantress sent by the gods, the moment he sets eyes on her, tumbling into the dark abyss, like the moth into the flame. Infatuated with women, gold, jewellery, fine clothes and the like, the work of Māyā, and tempted by the desire for enjoyment, the fool perishes like the moth. The sage, following the honey-bee, should collect from householders just enough food to meet the body's needs, taking it in

¹ He must not be submerged in torpor, nor should he allow his senses to distract him from concentration.

small quantities from a number of them so as not to cause them hardship. The skilful man should extract the essence from all Śāstras, whether of wide or of limited scope, as the honey-bee does from flowers. The mendicant must not save for the night or for the morrow from the food he begs ; he should not hoard like the honey-fly, but receive only what his cupped hands will hold or his belly take. If he saves for the future, he will perish like the hoarder bee along with his hoard¹ (7-12).

He should not so much as touch with his foot anything in the likeness of a woman, even if it be but a wooden doll; if he did, he would fall into captivity, like the elephant succumbing to the caress of the cow-elephant. The wise man should never run after a woman, for she will be the death of him ; he will lay himself open to attack by men stronger than himself, as the male elephant is beset by stronger rivals. What misers accumulate with infinite hardship, neither giving away any of it nor consuming it themselves, is enjoyed by somebody else who knows what it is and how to get at it, as honey is by the man who raids the hives. Like the raider of the hive, it is the ascetic that comes in for the first share out of the hard-earned wealth of the householders on which they build their hopes of domestic felicity (13-16).

The forest-dwelling ascetic should never hear profane music, he should be warned by the fate of the deer lured by the fowler's tune and captured. Rśyaśṅga, born of a deer, succumbed to women and became their plaything by his delighted enjoyment of their popular music, song and dance. Stupid men are driven to their doom by the imperious pleasures of the palate like fish by the baited hook. By going without food intelligent men may quickly control all other senses, but not the palate ; which becomes, the more demanding, the more it is starved. A man has not established mastery over the senses, if he has subdued all the others but not the palate ; when that is conquered all is conquered (17-21).

In days past, there lived in the city of Vidiśā a courte-

¹ The bee is also to be regarded as a warning, in that it is occasionally so absorbed in sucking the honey of a particular flower (lotus) that when it closes in the evening it is bottled up in it (S).

san named Pingalā, from whom too I learnt something. What it was you shall hear, Prince. One day the wanton, dressed in all her finery, stationed herself at the door at the usual hour, to receive any one who might wish to go to bed with her. Looking at the men who were coming that way, the greedy woman imagined they must be rich and prepared to pay, and would therefore be worth making love to. When they went their way, the woman who earned a living by making such assignations told herself, 'Some other man with money will surely come seeking me and give me plenty'. Kept sleepless by this vain hope, she hung on to the door till midnight, going in and coming out. As she, wan with greed, reflected despondently, there came upon her a great revulsion of feeling, which brought her solace. Let me tell you what she said in her disgust; for disgust is the sharp sword that sunders the bonds of desire. No man who has not known such disillusionment snaps the ties of the body; even as no one who lacks knowledge of the Self gives up his egotism, O King. Pingalā said: 'Alas for me, silly fool, knowing no self-control, crazy with longing for the love of the ignoble! Ignoring the Eternal Lover Who is ever with me to bestow joy and all abundance, I in my ignorance court the unworthy, who cannot give me what I want, but can bring me only sorrow and fear, agony of mind and delusion. Alas, alas! I have harrowed my soul to no purpose, earning a despicable living by prostitution, seeking to obtain money and the satisfaction of lust from some lascivious creature, stingy and pitiable, by selling my body to him. Who is the woman other than me that would care for this house rigged up with bones for pillars, beams and cross-beams, covered with skin, hair and nails, having seven running holes, and crammed with turd and urine? I am the solitary fool in this city of Vidiśā, since I look for other joy than Achyuta here, Who gives even Himself. He (the Lord) is the well-wisher and friend, the best beloved of all creatures, their protector and their very soul. With my soul for price, I shall buy Him and rejoice in His company as Ramā does (22-35).

What abiding satisfaction did any wife ever get

from her spouse, whether man or god, since the pleasures they gave were transient and they themselves were fleeing before time? I have no doubt that I have pleased the exalted Lord Vishnu by something that I have done, seeing that this revulsion of feeling has come over me, who harboured evil desires, and has made me happy. If I had been really unfortunate, I would not have undergone these sufferings that have brought me the loathing for the worldly life that makes men renounce all ties and brings them tranquillity. Receiving this gracious favour of His on my bowed head and abjuring the evil expectations that are bound up with vulgar pleasures, I shall throw myself on the mercy of the All-Powerful Lord. Supremely content in this faith, I shall live by what chance brings, and shall assuredly be happy with Him, my Soul and Lover. Who else has the sovereign power to rescue me who, blinded by sensuality, have fallen into the pit of *samsāra* and am caught in the jaws of time, the devouring serpent? When a man, realizing that the world is caught in the toils of time, the serpent, becomes vigilant and turns away from all else, then he will be able to save himself by his own efforts.' The Brahmana said: 'Having taken this resolution and shaken off the despair born of the longing for a lover, she tranquilly lay down to sleep. Desire brings abject misery; to be freed from it, is to be supremely happy, as Pingalā discovered when she plucked from her heart the longing for a lover, and slept well' (36-44).

CHAPTER IX

THE ASCETIC CONCLUDES HIS TEACHING

The Brahmana went on with his teaching: The acquisition of whatever men love most only brings them sorrow. He who, knowing this, has abjured all possessions, has endless happiness. An osprey, which had got hold of a piece of flesh, was assaulted by stronger ones which had none; he threw it away and knew the blessedness of peace. I know neither pride nor humiliation nor the cares that visit men who have homes and children. Childlike I go where I please, finding in myself entertainment and delight. There are only two who are

ever care-free and bathed in bliss—the innocent child, who does not act purposefully, and the man who has reached Him¹ Who is beyond the *guṇas* (1-4).

A young maid, who lived in a certain place, had to offer hospitality to some people who came to her house seeking her hand in marriage, when her near of kin were away. When she was husking paddy on the sly for their food, the shell bangles on her wrists jingled loudly, O King. Being ashamed to do what she thought was undignified, the intelligent girl removed² the bangles one by one till only two were left on each arm. But when she went on with the husking, she found that even two could make a noise. She removed one again, and when there was only one left there was no noise. And I, wandering about the world to learn what it could teach me, learnt this lesson of her, O subduer of the foe. Where many live together, there will be strife; even where there are only two, there will be talk. So one should be a solitary, like that maiden's bangle. Having gained control over the breath, with the maintenance of the correct *yogic* posture, one should unweariedly concentrate the mind, steadying it by constant practice and by the cultivation of dispassion, on that One Object, having found firm lodgement in Which it gradually rids itself of instinctive desires, and overcoming *tamas* and *rajas* by the augmented power of *sattva*, becomes quiescent, having nothing to feed upon. With his mind thus absorbed in the *Ātman*, he will be conscious of nothing within or without, like the artificer of arrows, whose attention was so concentrated on the one that he was fashioning, that he failed to notice the king marching past with his retinue (5-12).

The sage should be a lonely wanderer with no fixed abode; living in his secret lair, he should be ever alert, his actions giving no clue to his thoughts; he should avoid company and stint speech. To make a home for oneself is to ask for endless trouble; and it is futile, too, seeing that the body may perish any moment. The

¹ The text has *guṇebhyaḥ param gataḥ*, (lit. 'he who has transcended the sway of the *guṇas*'); the translation follows S. ² 'babhanja' (broke) says the text. But as it is inauspicious to break a bangle (apart from its value), S. apparently preferred 'removed'.

serpent is happy, living in a home made by another (13-15).

God Nārāyaṇa, the Omnipresent Overlord, withdraws into Himself at the end of each *Kalpa*, by a mere effort of will, and employing time, His power, the universe, which He had himself created by His Power of *Māyā*, and rests as the Sole Existent, grounded in the *Ātman* and containing all things within Himself. When by His power of time the three-fold *guṇas*, *sattva* and the rest, the instruments of His will, have been restored to the state of equilibrium, He, the First Cause, the Overlord of Pradhāna and Puruṣa, remains as the Abode of the liberated souls, including the highest; and He Himself is known as Freedom, being Pure Self-intuition and All-Bliss, unqualified by limitations. From that pristine state, He again effects the disequilibrium of the three *guṇas* of *Māyā*, His Power, using his attribute, time, and brings about the creation, through *Māyā*, of *Mahat*, characterised mainly by its creative activity, O subduer of the foe. It is spoken of as the product of the three *guṇas* and the creator of the multiform universe, which is strung on it as on a thread, and by reason of associating with which the *jīva* passes into the transmigratory life. Just as the spider draws out from itself a thread through the mouth, weaves it into a web, plays with it, and then retracts and swallows it, so does the Supreme Lord. Whatever a man concentrates on with one-pointed attention, for any reason, love or hate or fear, to that he becomes assimilated. The worm, immured by the wasp in a hole in the wall, and thinking of it in dread all the time, becomes like it in appearance, without giving up its body, O King (16-23).

These various truths I learnt from the teachers I have mentioned. Let me now tell you, my lord, what I have learnt from my own body. The body, being subject to birth and death, with the attendant and incessant misery, has taught me non-attachment; it has also brought me discrimination by enabling me to reflect dispassionately on the eternal truths. But remembering that it belongs to others, I avoid forming any attachment to it. The body, for whose enjoyment a man acquires

and supports a wife, children, goods, animals, servants, friends, and so on, perishes when its allotted term is over, notwithstanding that for its sake he had undergone untold hardships to accumulate all those possessions; but before dying, it sows, like the tree, the seed of his rebirth. The palate drags him one way; thirst another; the sex instinct, the sense of touch, hunger, the craving of the ear, and likewise the sense of smell, the roving eye, and the organs of action pull him in different directions, tearing him to pieces, as rival co-wives do their lord and master. Having created by His Power of *Māyā* many and various vehicles—trees, reptiles, animals, birds, gnats, fish—and being dissatisfied with every one of them, the Supreme Lord created the human body, possessed of intelligence, using which the *Brahma* may be realised, and was happy. Having been dowered after many a birth with a human body, which it is so difficult to gain, and which, though transient, can enable one to achieve the supreme end of life, the wise man should with all celerity strive for liberation, before that which is ever in the presence of death is struck down; as for sense pleasures, why, they are available to every creature born! Having thus attained dispassion and shed attachment and egotism, I roam the earth, secure in the knowledge of the Self-luminous *Ātman*. From no single teacher can one have knowledge that is both certain and abundant; for the *Brahma*, the One without a second, is spoken of variously by the sages (24-31).

The exalted Lord concluded: Having thus taught *Yadu*, that profoundly wise *Brahmana*¹ took leave of him; pleased with the King who had solicited instruction, and receiving his humble prostrations, he went his way. Imbibing the wisdom imparted by the ascetic, he, the first of our race, shed all attachment, and attained equipoise (32-33).

¹ 'the *Brahmana*': inferentially, *Dattātreya*, who in another context is said to have initiated *Yadu* in yoga.

CHAPTER X

THE LORD ON KARMA MĀRGA

The exalted Lord (said Suka) went on. He said : He who puts his trust in Me should, while vigilantly practising the Dharmas that I have taught, scrupulously discharge the duties devolving on him from his *varṇa*, *āśrama* and family tradition, without desire for the fruits thereof. With a mind purified by this, he should be able to see that everything that men who are addicted to sense-pleasures undertake from the conviction that these pleasures are real, results in the contrary of what they had hoped for. The visions that the sleeper or the man lost in reverie has, have no substance, being many and various ; equally unreal is the diversity apprehended by the senses. My devotee should refrain from the *karmas* prompted by desire, and practise only those that would promote his withdrawal from the world. When he is fairly launched on the inquiry into the nature of the Self, let him not be too solicitous about the observance of even those *karmas* that are positively enjoined. He should be indefatigable in pursuing the internal disciplines which help to subdue the senses, while practising to the extent possible the external means to the same end. But he should have even greater zeal for service to the Guru, who has realized Me and has found peace, and is My other self. He should devotedly wait upon him, putting away pride and jealousy, exercising diligence, and eschewing egotistic attachments. He should have a deep and abiding affection for his Guru. He should be steady in mind, keen on the realization of the Self, and unenvious, and careful to avoid unnecessary speech (1-6).

Realizing that the *Ātman* finds the same satisfaction in every¹ body, he should look with detachment and unconcern on wife and children, home and landed possessions, connections and riches. The *Ātman* is other than both the gross and the subtle bodies, because It is diffe-

¹ As the *Ātman*, which dwells in all bodies, finds no more satisfaction in one body than in another, there is no reason why one should have special affection for one's own body or for one's wife and children.

rent in Its nature, being intelligent, and the activator of their faculties, even as fire, which can light up a place as well as burn a log, is different from the latter. And as the fire that burns the log seems to possess the characteristics of the latter, such as the liability to extinction, the capacity for ignition, smallness, bigness and multifariousness, so does the *Ātman* seem to possess the properties of the body, though it is different from it. The transmigratory life of the *jīva* starts from its erroneous identification of itself with the gross and subtle bodies that are the product of the *guṇas* which the Lord commands; knowledge of the Self removes the error. Therefore one should, by proper inquiry, arrive at a true understanding of the *Ātman*, which is lodged in the body, but is unconnected with and different from it, and realize by methodical reasoning,¹ the unreality of the body and the like. The preceptor is the lower firestick, the pupil the upper; the teaching is the churning rod, plied between them, and the knowledge that brings felicity is born of their contact. The vivid and direct knowledge imparted by a master-mind dispels the delusion that is the product of the three *guṇas*, and then, consuming those *guṇas* themselves, which are the stuff of the universe, dies down like a fire without fuel (7-13).

Even if you accept the view² that the *jīvas*, who perform *karmas* and experience pain and pleasure, are many and that the worlds of enjoyment, time³, the injunctions of the Sāstras in regard to *karma*, and the experiencers are all eternal; if, further, you consider that all objects of enjoyment are perpetually renewed and real, and that consciousness arises with the objects it apprehends, and changes as they change; even then, you will concede, my friend, that by reason of being joined with bodies, all creatures are subject to birth and numberless other changes from the revolution of time. And we see that, whether in doing *karma* or in

¹ 'By methodical reasoning', proceeding from the more to the less obvious, from the unreality of the gross body to that of the subtle.

² The *prima-facie* view stated here is that of the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā. It does not admit the existence of one unchanging Supreme Soul. ³ 'time': the time after death when the fruits of *karma* are enjoyed.

experiencing pain and pleasure, no man has freedom. What happiness could the unfree have from anything? Even the learned are not always happy, nor are the ignorant always miserable; it is vain egotism to think otherwise. Even if they know how happiness may be won and misery got rid of, they certainly know no way of stopping the onslaught of death. What happiness could the man, who has death ever at his elbow, get out of riches or objects of enjoyment, any more than he who has been condemned, and is being led to the place of execution? (14-20).

The joys of heaven, of which one hears so much, are as vitiated as those of this world by jealousy and calumny, by the fact that they may be surpassed by those of others, and the thought that they must be exhausted. And because of the many obstacles, as in the practice of husbandry, to the realization of one's hopes, the efforts to win those joys might be fruitless. Supposing a man has been able to practise successfully, unchecked by obstacles, the Dharmas prompted by desire to which he devotes himself, let us see how he attains the place he has won thereby. The sacrificer, who has propitiated the gods by sacrifices he has offered in this world, goes to the world of the gods, and there enjoys, godlike, the heavenly pleasures that he has earned. Attired and adorned attractively, he diverts himself in the company of goddesses in a lofty and splendid mansion sumptuously provided with the comforts that his merits have earned, while the Gandharvas sing his praises. Journeying by an aerial car, adorned with rows of little bells, that moves obedient to his will, he sports with the women care-free in the playgrounds of the gods, oblivious of the fall that awaits him. He is happy in heaven until his store of merit is exhausted. When that is gone, he falls headlong, most unwillingly, hurled down by time (21-26).

If he is a man who is addicted to unrighteousness by reason of the evil company he keeps and, lacking self-control, is distracted by desires, and miserable, and is the slave of women, he inflicts injury on living creatures¹. Slaughtering animals without any regard for the rules,

¹ By the practice of necromancy.

he propitiates the spirits of the dead and the elementals. When he dies, he, animal that he is, falls into hell, helpless to save himself, and swallowed up by the dread darkness.¹ The man who employs his body in the performance of *karmas* whose end-product is misery, earns as a consequence another body. What happiness could he, who is doomed to death, have in it? The worlds, and their Guardians who live for a *Kalpa*, go in fear of Me, and so does Brahmā, for all that His life extends to two *parārdhas* (27-30).

It is the organs that perform *karmas*; they are prompted to it by the three *guṇas*. The *jīva*, identifying himself with the senses, reaps the fruits of *karma*. So long as the effects of the *guṇas* are felt, the *jīvas* will regard themselves as many and will remain in a state of dependence.² While the *jīva* continues in that state, he will go in fear of the Supreme Lord. Those who remain subject to the sway of the *guṇas* and obey their dictates, are deluged by misery and lost in delusion. While the disequilibrium of the *guṇas* lasts, I am spoken of variously as time, as the experiencing *Ātman*, as the *Sāstra*, as the worlds of enjoyment, as innate disposition³, and as the *karma* that results in enjoyment (31-34).

Uddhava asked: 'How can a man, while remaining under the sway of the *guṇas*, be free from bondage to the activities and experiences that the possession of a body brings? If he is actually not circumscribed by these, how can there be bondage for him? If he is not bound in fact, what manner of life does he lead? What are his diversions? By what outward signs may he be known? How does he eat or evacuate, lie down, sit still or go about? Be pleased to clarify these doubts, O Achyuta, Thou art foremost of those who know the answers to all such questions. It confuses my mind to think of the same *Ātman* as eternally bound and eternally free' (35-37).

¹ He is reborn as inanimate things, such as trees. ² i.e., as long as the phenomenal world, with *Īśvara*, as Ruler of all *jīvas*, lasts; the *jīvas* looking upon themselves as many and subject to Him, ³ 'innate disposition': which elevates one to the rank of a god, for example, in the next world.

CHAPTER XI

BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

The exalted Lord answered : The *Ātman* is spoken of as bound or free by reason of its subservience or otherwise to the *guṇas*, which obey Me. It is neither bound nor free in truth, since the *guṇas* originate from *Māyā*. I know neither bondage nor freedom. Grief and infatuation, joy and sorrow, and the *jīva*'s migration from body to body are all due to *Māyā*. The transmigratory life is unreal, being like dream visions, which are due to the mind's misapprehension. You should know, O Uddhava, that enlightenment and nescience are My Powers, produced by My *Māyā*, and operating from all eternity, and having respectively the power to release embodied souls and to keep them in bondage. O you of the acute mind, it is the *jīva* alone, an *aṁśa* of Mine, Who am One and only One, that is in beginningless bondage, due to his nescience ; and enlightenment makes him eternally free (1-4).

Now I shall tell you the difference between the bound and the free¹, who though lodged in the same body are of different natures. These are two birds with beautiful wings, alike in essence, and companions. They have by chance made their nest in a tree. One of them, eats the fruit of that peepul tree. The other, though he does not eat, is the stronger by far. He who does not eat is the One Who knows both Himself and the other, not the one who eats ; he, wedded to nescience, has been bound from all eternity, while He who is predominantly Intelligence has been ever free (5-7).

The liberated soul, though still tenanted the body, feels no more part of it than does the sleeper when he wakes, in regard to his dream-body ; whereas the man who is still in a state of ignorance looks upon himself as one with the body, though he is not, just as the dreamer

¹ In reply to Uddhava's question how the bound and the free are to be distinguished, the Lord deals with two different aspects of that distinction : (1) the difference between *jīva* and *Īśvara* and (2) the difference between the *jīva* who is still bound and the *jīva* who has won liberation. This and the next verse deal with the former, the next ten verses deal with the latter.

does. Even when his senses are engaged with their objects, the enlightened man does not regard himself as responsible for their actions, realizing as he does that it is the products of the *guṇas* that are thus attracted to their like ; and he remains unaffected. But the ignorant man allows himself to be bound by attachment to his body, which is the product of his past *karma*, by looking upon himself as the agent of actions which are really performed by the organs of the body. The wise man, who has achieved detachment, does not thus fall into the snare of sense-pleasures, though he feeds the senses with their appropriate pabulum when performing such acts as lying down, sitting still, going about, bathing, seeing, touching, smelling, eating, hearing, and so on ; for, though he remains in the body, he is as aloof as the sky, sun and air. With his subtle intelligence sharpened by non-attachment, he severs the doubts that assail him and turns his back on the world of multiplicity, as the sleeper discards his dream on waking. As the operations of his vital airs, senses, mind and intellect, are not directed to willed ends, he is free from the tyranny of the body, though he abides in it. If a man has won enlightenment, he is little affected one way or other, whether his body is tormented by the cruel or is by chance accorded a little honour by somebody somewhere¹ (8-15).

The sage who has shed the notions of good and evil, and who looks on all things with an equal eye, will neither praise those who do or say what is right, or blame those who do the contrary. And he will himself neither do nor speak, nor let his mind dwell on anything ; finding all delight in the Self, the sage will live in this wise, like an idiot. The man who, though well-versed in the teaching of the Vedas, does not strenuously devote himself to the realization of the Supreme Brahma, will have nothing for his pains, like him who keeps a cow that has long been sterile. The man who saddles himself with a cow that has gone dry, a wife who cannot give him love, a body that is a slave to others, a son who is a ne'er-

¹ All these, which are the signs by which the liberated man may be known, are also the disciplines by which the aspirant to liberation frees himself (S.)

do-well, wealth that is not bestowed on the deserving, and speech that does not sing My praises, has nothing to look forward to but sorrow upon sorrow, My friend. The wise man will have no use for barren words that do not tell the sanctifying tale of My work as the Prime Cause of the maintenance, creation and destruction of the universe, or of those incarnations of Mine in which I found delight and which specially appeal to the hearts of men. Engaging in this spirit in the inquiry into the Self, he should rid himself of the error of seeing multiplicity in the *Ātman*; and devoting the mind, thus purified, wholly to Me, the All-Pervading, cease from all activity (16-21).

If you are unable to fix your mind steadily on the Brahma, do all work dis-interestedly, dedicating it to Me. The man who hears with faith the auspicious tales of My exploits, which purify the worlds, sings the glories of My life and work, dwelling in his mind on them with love, often imitating them in his own person, and devotes himself to Dharma, Artha, and Kāma for My sake, putting his trust wholly in Me—that man gains a rock-like devotion to Me, the Eternal, O Uddhava. By dint of such devotion to Me, inspired by association with the good, he will assiduously practise My presence¹ and without a doubt realize Me easily in My essential being, shown the way by the enlightened (22-25).

Uddhava asked: 'Who is the man, O illustrious Lord, whom Thou wouldst accept as a good man? And what is the highest kind of devotion, which the saints have favoured, and which would be worthy of Thee? It is Thou, O sovereign Lord and Ruler of the worlds and Controller of the great Powers, that must enlighten Me, who love Thee and have sought refuge with Thee and thrown myself at Thy feet. Thou art the Supreme Brahma, unsoiled like *ākāśa*, Thou art the Great Spirit beyond Prakṛti. Taking a finite body to meet the wishes of Thine own², Thou hast descended into this world, O Lord' (26-28).

¹ That is, engage in deep meditation (*dhyāna-śīlah*) (S.)

² i.e. 'Thy devotees'.

The Lord answered : The good man¹ is full of compassion ; he would never harm any living thing ; he has forbearance ; truth is his unfailing strength. He is of a flawless disposition, equable in all circumstances, and the benefactor of all ; his mind is never disturbed by desires ; his senses are under control, he is tender-hearted, and scrupulous² in his observances, he owns no more than bare necessities. He has abjured all outward activity. He eats sparingly, and his mind is ever under control. Staunch in duty, he puts himself into My hands and lives the life of the contemplative. He is vigilant and self-possessed, and of an indomitable courage, and he has risen above the six disabilities. Unanxious for the esteem of others, he holds all men in respect. He is a good teacher and a sincere friend ; he is inspired in all his actions by benevolence ; his is the true wisdom. In every way as good as such a man is he who, knowing full well the benefits accruing from the performance of those duties that I have ordained, and the penalties that violation thereof would entail, still neglects them in order to devote himself entirely to My worship. I look upon them as the foremost of My devotees, who give their exclusive devotion to Me, whether³ they know or do not know how great I am, who I am, and what My essential nature is (29-33).

Reverently gazing on, touching, and worshipping My image and My devotees ; rendering loving service to them ; singing hymns of praise ; humbling oneself before them and glorifying their qualities and exploits ; showing an ardent desire to hear about Me ; constantly meditating on Me, O Uddhava ; assigning all one's gains to Me, and dedicating oneself to My service ; reciting the story of My births and exploits ; celebrating important events connected with Me ; conducting festivals in My temples with congregational singing, dancing and music ; holding religious fairs and making flower

¹ 'Good' or 'saintly' (*sādhu*) is used as generally inter-changeable with the 'devotee' in these discussions. Saints like Nārada are regarded as the prototype. ² (*lit*) pure. ³ (*alt.*) 'Who, having known from repeated experience how great...' This is preferred by all commentators except J.

offerings on important annual occasions ; getting oneself initiated in My worship according to the modes prescribed in the Vedas and the Āgamas ; observing vows for securing My grace ; displaying zeal for consecration of My images ; bringing effective enterprise to such tasks (undertaken either singly or in concert with others) as the laying out of flower-gardens and orchards and the construction of pleasantries and enclosures with shrines ; doing sincere service in My temples as a lowly servitor, sweeping the floor, smearing it with cowdung, sprinkling water and drawing mystical diagrams¹ on it ; eschewing pride and ostentation, and carefully avoiding mention of one's own good deeds—by these signs one may know the true devotee. Any offering made to another, even if it be nothing more than the waving of lights, should not then be served to Me. My worshipper should offer Me whatever is most prized by the world, and whatever he himself likes best. Doing that, he shall find it returned to him a thousandfold (34-41).

The sun, fire, the Brahmana, cows, the devotee of Vishnu, the sky, air, water, the earth, one's own body, and all living creatures, are the vehicles in which I may be properly worshipped. I should be worshipped in the sun with the chanting of Vedic hymns ; in the fire, with the making of oblations ; in a worthy Brahmana, with the offer of hospitality ; in cows, with grass and other fodder ; in the devotee of Vishnu, with the loving attentions lavished on near relations ; in the space within the heart, with steady contemplation ; in the air, by meditating on Me as the life-breath ; in the water, with the offer of libations with prescribed materials ; in the earth, with the *nyāsas* of secret *mantras* ; and in the body, with the enjoyment of lawful pleasures, dedicated to his own soul. He should worship Me, as the Inner Ruler in all creatures, by displaying equal regard for all. In all these abodes of Mine, he should worship Me with a collected mind, picturing Me to himself as carrying the conch, the discus, the mace and the lotus, and radiating peace. He who worships Me with a steady mind, by offering sacrifices and founding charities, attains un-

¹ 'drawing diagrams': S. renders *mandala-vartanam* as 'sarvatoḥbhaḍrādi-karaṇam'.

shaken devotion to Me. And then, by applying himself zealously to the service of the good, He comes to know Me as I truly am. There is practically no other way (of release) except the staunch devotion that comes from association with My devotees, O Uddhava, for to My devotees, I am the Supreme Refuge. And now I shall impart to you the highly secret teaching, O scion of the Yadus, listen carefully. Though it is secret doctrine, I am revealing it to you, because you are My devoted servant, My bosom friend and comrade' (42-49).

CHAPTER XII

ASSOCIATION WITH THE GOOD

The exalted Lord said: Yogic practices, correct discrimination of the *tattvas*¹, cultivation of the fundamental virtues, recitation of the Veda, performance of penances, renunciation, sacrifices, charities, gifts, observance of vows, worship of the gods, the uttering of secret *mantras*, going on pilgrimages, control of the body and the mind—none of these things wins My favour, O blameless one, so surely as does a man's attachment to My devotees, which puts an end to all worldly attachments. It was by consorting with My devotees that in every age many an Asura, Rākshasa, animal, bird, Gandharva, Apsaras, Nāga, Siddha, Chāraṇa, and Vidyādhara, and among men, many Vaiśyas, Sūdras, women and the lowest classes, reached Me, O sinless one, though they were by nature inclined to restless activity or ignorance. Such were the son of Tvashtā (Vṛtra), the son of Kayādu (Prahāda), Vrishaparvā, Bali, Bāṇa, Maya, Vibheśhaṇa, Sugrīva, Hanumān, the bear (Jāmbavān), the elephant, the eagle (Jatāyu), the trader, the hunter², the hunchback, the Gopis of Vraja, the spouses of the Brahmana sacrificers, as well as many others. They had neither studied the Vedas nor lived in pupilage under men of wisdom; had observed no vows and practised no austerities; and yet they attained Me by association with the saintly. By pure love for Me, the

¹ 'Yoga' and 'Sāṅkhya': The teaching of the Darsanas so named.

² 'the trader' and 'the hunter': The Tulādhāra and the Dharma Vyādhā, whose expositions of Dharma in *Mbh.* are notable.

Gopis, the cows, the trees, the beasts, and other silly creatures, such as the serpents, easily found their supreme fulfilment in attaining Me; while even he who zealously strives to reach Me by means of yoga, by the acquisition of correct knowledge of the *tattvas*, by the giving of gifts, the observance of vows, the performance of penance, the offering of sacrifices, the recitation and study of the Veda, or renunciation, is often baffled in the attempt. When I was led to Mathurā, along with Rama, by the son of Svaphalka, they (the Gopis), whose hearts held fast to Me with staunch love, would not, in the agony of separation, turn to any other for comfort. Those nights, too marvellous¹ for words, which had passed for them like a moment when they spent them with Me, their Best Beloved, in Vrndāvana, seemed like an eternity to them, My friend, when they lost Me. Their minds were so wholly absorbed in Me by reason of their attachment that they were oblivious of their kith and kin, their very bodies, of that world and this alike, as the sages in deep meditation are unaware of name and form; they were lost in Me like rivers that lose themselves in the sea. Loving Me with an all too human passion as the lover who ravished their hearts, and having no notion of Who I am in reality, those women nevertheless attained Me, the Supreme Brahma, in their thousands by the strength of their attachment. Therefore, O Uddhava, concerning yourself no more with injunction and prohibition, with the way of involvement in the world and the way of renunciation, with the knowledge you have acquired and with what is yet to be gained, surrender yourself to Me, the One Refuge, the One Soul in all beings, looking upon Me as the Goal of all your hopes and desires. Through Me you shall free yourself from all fear (1-15).

Uddhava submitted, 'Having heard all that Thou hast said, O Lord of the Master-yogis, the doubts in my mind in regard to the *Ātman*² still persist, and they confuse me' (16).

Thereupon, the Lord elaborated His answer: The

¹ The text has 'tāstāh'; but S. elaborates it. ² Whether the *Ātman* is agent and experiencer, or whether It is unaffected by what the body does,

Supreme Lord, Who manifests Himself in the psychic centres, first enters the cave (the *Mūla-ādhāra*) accompanied by the vibrating life-breath known as *Parā*, and then taking successively the subtle forms (*Paśyantī* and *Madhyamā*), which are of the stuff of the mind, emerges in the gross form (*Vaikhari*) as syllabic time, accent and audible sound. Just as the heat in the space (within a piece of wood) becomes a minute spark aided by the wind, when the wood is briskly rubbed, and then, gathering strength, bursts into a flame when oblations are made in it, so does the revealed word manifest Me. Similarly speech, the actions of the hands, the movements of the feet, the functioning of the organs of evacuation and of the senses of smell, taste, sight, touch and hearing, the mind's purposing, the intellect's discrimination, the ego's possessiveness, the power of action of Mahat, and the results of the disequilibrium of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are all My Self-manifestations. *Īśvara* is at the beginning unmanifest, and the only Existent; but when at the proper time He purposefully employs His power of *Māyā*, He appears to be many, like seed that has found fruitful soil. He is the Prime Cause, the Abode of the three *guṇas*, and from Him springs the world-lotus. In Him is the universe established, as is the cloth in the warp and the woof (17-21).

This tree of *samsāra* has existed from all eternity; its nature is activity; it produces flower and fruit¹; it has two seeds, hundreds of roots, three stems and five boughs; it produces five flavours, and it has eleven branches. Two birds nest in it. It has three barks and yields two fruits, and it extends up to the sun.² The village kites eat one of the fruits, the swans of the forest the other. He who knows, by resorting to a Guru worthy of reverence, the truth that the One Supreme Spirit takes many forms, which are of the stuff of *Māyā*, truly knows. Realizing this truth by the use of your intelligence, you should devote yourself to the Guru, and be vigilant to cut down the subtle body, which imprisons the *jīva*, with one-pointed devotion to Me and

¹ i.e. enjoyment and liberation, or *karma* and its fruit; c.f. X. 2. 27, p. 169 ante. For the rest see Notes. ² *Samsāra* ceases for him whose soul penetrates to the orb of the sun.

the sharp axe of knowledge that liberates. You will attain the Supreme Spirit, and then you may discard the weapon (22-24).

CHAPTER XIII

THE LORD, AS A SWAN, ON JNĀNA

The Lord continued: The *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, belong to Prakṛti, not to the Ātman. Through growth in *sattva*, one should overcome the other two, and then put down *sattva* by using it against itself. From the enhancement of *sattva* comes the Dharma of devotion to Me. The *sāttvic* element in one is strengthened by the use of substances that are favourable to it. And the Dharma of devotion, which is the highest, because it strengthens *sattva* in its turn, eliminates both *rajas* and *tamas*. And Adharma, which is the product of those two, quickly perishes when they are gone. The Sāstra that one studies, the water one uses, the people one consorts with, the place where one is habitually found, the time of day that one favours, the *karma* one performs, the sacrament that one receives, the object of one's contemplation, the *mantra* that one is initiated in, the kind of purification that one practises—these influence one's *guṇas*. Those among these which men who are learned in the Sāstras commend are *sāttvic*, those which they condemn are *tāmasic*, those which they ignore are *rājasic*. A man should lay himself open only to the *sāttvic* influences, to strengthen the *sāttvic* element in him. Doing that, he will grow in Dharma and in the knowledge that brings experience of the Self with the negation of the not-Self. The fire that is kindled by the friction of bamboo against bamboo burns the bamboo forest and then dies down; the body, which is the product of the disequilibrium of the *guṇas*, acts in the same way and ceases to be (1-7).

Uddhava asked: 'How is it, O Krishna, that though most men realize that the pleasures of the senses are a death-trap, they remain as engrossed in them as the cur, the donkey or the goat?' (8).

The exalted Lord answered: A false notion in regard to his Self arises in the heart of the man who

lacks discrimination ; hence his mind, though constituted predominantly of *sattva*, is pervaded by *rajas*, which is of the nature of sorrow. The mind dominated by *rajas* proposes ends to itself and debates alternatives ; and when his mind thus comes to dwell on the attractions offered by the senses, the ignorant man is seized with an intolerable longing for them. A slave to his desires, because he has not subdued his senses, he engages in action, seduced by the irresistible power of *rajas*, though he knows it can only end in misery. But the man of discrimination, while he might be distracted by *rajas* and *tamas*, realizes the harm they can do ; and curbing the mind by a resolute effort, he can keep himself free from attachments. Or, let him, controlling the breath by the maintenance of correct posture, unweariedly and by deliberate effort fix his mind on Me and meditate on Me regularly at the right time with all vigilance. However that might be done, abstracting the mind from all else and focussing it directly and well on Me—that was the essence of the Yoga that My disciples Sanaka and others taught (9-14).

Uddhava asked : ‘ When didst Thou expound this Yoga to Sanaka and others, and in what guise didst Thou do it, O Keśava ? I am eager to hear about these things ’ (15).

The Lord answered : Sanaka and the other mind-born sons of Hiranyagarbha questioned their father on that great and subtle mystery, the ultimate goal of yoga. This was what Sanaka and the rest asked : ‘ The mind is drawn to the objects of enjoyment ; and they linger in the mind, O Lord. How is the man who wishes to escape the lure of pleasure and to attain freedom, to effect the separation of the two ? ’ When he was thus questioned, the great God, the Self-existent Creator of the worlds, pondered long, but could not see how this question came to be asked, since His mind was distracted by activity. Wishing to be able to answer the question, He meditated on Me, and I appeared before Him, taking the form of a swan. On seeing Me, they came and made their prostrations to Me, and under the leadership of Brahmā questioned Me : ‘ May we know who Thou art, Honoured One ? ’ That was a question put Me by

sages who were in quest of truth. I will tell you, Uddhava, what I said to them in reply. 'If this question concerns the Ātman, how can it be legitimately asked at all, O Brahmanas, since in its essence it is one, not many¹? And by reference to what particulars shall I answer you? If the question "Who art Thou?" relates to the bodies of creatures, which are all constituted of the five elements, and are not really different from one another in substance or essence, it can only be regarded as just a set of words, devoid of content. By proper inquiry you will realize that whatever is apprehended by the mind, speech, sight or other faculties is only Me, and not something else (16-24).

'It is true, My children, that the mind is drawn to the objects of enjoyment, and they linger in the mind; the mind and the residual impressions of enjoyment are thus knit together. But the *jīva* is of My essence; the body is only a super-imposition on him. Since by reason of repeated indulgence in sense-pleasures, the mind clings to the world of the senses, and the objects of enjoyment, striking roots in the mind, assert their hold again, one should rid oneself of both by consciously identifying oneself with Me. The states of waking, dream and sleep are merely mental states caused by the three *guṇas*. The *jīva* is clearly different from them, being only the witness thereof. Since it is the (bondage to the) mind that imposes on the *jīvātman* these states, which are the product of the *guṇas*, one should free oneself from that thralldom by identifying oneself with Me, the Fourth²; thereupon the attachment of the mind to the world of the senses will be severed. Realizing that the bondage to the mind, caused by the ego, is detrimental to one's highest interests, one should be disgusted with it, and identifying oneself with the Fourth, sever one's attachment to the mind and discard the thoughts of enjoyment that it induces. So long as a man does not free himself by cogent reasoning from the (erroneous) notion of multiplicity, he will, because of that ignorance, live for all his alertness like the dreamer, who imagines that he is awake. Because of the un-

¹ 'Who art Thou?' implies the existence of more than one.

² i.e., the *Kūṭastha* (the highest) beyond the three states.

reality of one's own bodies and other possessions, the differences that are based on them, the goals posited and the means thereto, are false, like dream-visions. He who, in the waking state, experiences with all his faculties the objective world, which is of the nature of a perpetual flux; he who in a dream entertains subjective impressions of the same world; and he who in deep sleep puts an end to all that—these are not different persons but one and the same. He is the witness of the three states, being the ruler of the senses, with continuous memory of all of them (25-32).

Reflecting on these truths and arriving at the conclusion in regard to the supreme end (the Ātman) that the three states of the mind, which are the product of the *guṇas*, are super-imposed on Me by ignorance of My true nature, you should sunder the ego, the receptacle of all doubts, with the sword of knowledge sharpened by inference, the teaching of the wise, and the testimony of the Vedas, and devote yourselves to Me, ever seated in the heart. One must learn to look upon the world as an illusion, because it is conjured up by the mind, is objective in its nature, transient, and as unstable as the circle described by a burning brand that is whirled round and round. Consciousness is one; the diversity produced by the evolution of the *guṇas*, which appears multifold, is unreal like a dream. Therefore, he should withdraw his attention from the phenomenal world, renounce all desire and, plunging in the Bliss of the Self, become silent and cease from striving. If the world does sometimes impinge upon his consciousness, he will not be taken in, having already dismissed it as unreal; it will remain a dim memory in the background till such time as the body falls. The perfected man is not aware of the doings of his own body, a perishable thing, though it brought him the knowledge of the Self; he does not notice whether it remains seated or has got up, whether by chance it has gone out or come back, any more than the man who is dead drunk thinks of the cloth he had wound round his loins. As for the body, it continues to live by the decree of Destiny as long as the *karma* that brought it into being is operative. He who has attained to the state of *samādhi* in yoga and rea-

lized the Supreme Reality, will not care for it, or for whatever is connected with it, as to him these are no more than a dream (33-37).

'I have imparted to you, O Brahmanas, this secret teaching of the science of discrimination between the Self and the not-Self, and of Yoga. Know that it is Yajna (Vishnu) Who came here to teach you the Dharmas¹. I am, O worthy Brahmanas, the supreme Source of Yoga and Sāṅkhya, of truth in thought and truth in action, of prowess and power, of renown and self-restraint. All such qualities as equipoise and detachment, which have nothing of the three *guṇas* in them², dwell in Me, Who, free from all limitations and knowing no lack, am the Soul, the true Friend, the Well-beloved' (38-40).

The sages Sanaka and others, having thus had their doubts cleared by Me, worshipped Me with ecstatic devotion and sang My praises. Honoured and extolled by the great sages, I returned to My abode, even as the Creator was looking (41-42).

CHAPTER XIV

THE PRACTICE OF MEDITATION

Uddhava asked: 'Those who expound the Vedic teaching, O Krishna, speak of many ways of attaining the supreme good. May one opt indifferently for any of these, or is there only one chief means? Thou hast Thyself, O Master, taught the disinterested practice of devotion, whereby one fixes one's mind on Thee, severing all attachments' (1-2).

The Lord answered: The revealed Word, known as the Veda, had by the passage of time been lost in the Great Dissolution. And I revealed it again at the beginning (of creation) to Brahmā; it taught the Dharma which would make men give their minds to Me. And He taught it to Manu, his first-born. From him the seven Brahmarshis, the Progenitors, learnt it. From these their offspring received it—the gods, Dānavas,

¹ That this teaching of Dharmas, as well as knowledge of the Self, was imparted we must presume, though no details are given.

² They are not transient and changeable, like the *guṇas* of Prakṛti.

Guhyakas, mankind, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Vidyādhara and Chāraṇas, as well as godlike¹ mortals, Kinnaras, Nāgas, Rākshasas, and Kimpurushas (1-6).

Owing their origin to *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, they exhibited diverse dispositions. It is by this difference in disposition that the different classes of creatures are constituted; so are their ideas too. And in interpreting the Veda each follows his own natural bent. Men's opinions thus differ according to the difference of their natures. In the case of some these differences go back to their ancestors, whose opinions they have inherited. Others incline naturally to a heretical attitude towards the teaching of the Vedas. Taken in by My Māyā, men favour different means of attaining the Supreme, following their past *karma* or present predilections, O best of men. Some are for the performance of enjoined duties; others are for the winning of fame. Some regard the satisfaction of passion as the supreme goal. Others define truth, self-discipline and self-control as the means of attaining liberation. Yet others, as is well known, look upon sovereign power as the supreme end to be sought. Some think that to live well is the chief good, even at the cost of self-respect. Others prescribe the worship of the gods, the practice of austerities, the giving of gifts, the observance of vows, the disciplining of the body and the control of the mind as the means to the goal. The ends gained by these various means, being the result of the performance of *karma*, are finite; they terminate in sorrow and illusion; they bring paltry pleasures spoiled by regrets² (3-11).

How can those who hanker after pleasure know, O courteous one, that happiness which he, who has resigned himself into My hands and is wholly without desire, obtains when he realizes Me as one in essence with his own soul? He who has discarded all possessions, subdued his senses, and won peace and equipoise, and who having Me is well content, finds happiness wherever he turns. He who has given his soul into My keeping

¹ 'Men from other continents, who are so free from human disabilities that one is not sure whether they are men or gods' (S.).

² Even while they are being enjoyed, the thought of the envy of others spoils the enjoyment (S.).

wants nothing but Me—not the Creatorship of the worlds, nor the place of the great Indra, neither empire over men nor the lordship of the nether worlds, the powers of *yogic* adepts, nor even freedom from rebirth. Neither the Self-create nor Sankara, neither Sankarshana nor the Goddess of Plenty, not even this body of Mine, is dear to Me as you are, My honoured friend. I follow wherever he goes the sage who is free from all desire, and is at peace with himself, who has enmity towards none, and who looks on all with an equal eye, so that I may purify (the worlds¹) with the dust of his feet. Those who gratify Me by abjuring all possessions and loving Me with all their hearts, by their tranquillity and freedom from self-conceit, by their affection for all that lives, and their total lack of desire—they alone know that happiness which only the wantless know. Even that devotee of Mine who, not having established control over his senses, is tempted by pleasures, is as a rule saved from them by the fervour of his devotion. As the well-stoked fire reduces the fuel to ashes, so does devotion directed towards Me destroy all sins utterly, O Uddhava. My heart is won neither by Yoga nor by Sāṅkhya, neither by the practice of Dharma nor by the study of the Vedas, neither by austerities nor by abnegation, as it is, O Uddhava, by unswerving devotion to Me. I, the Ātman, Whom the saintly hold dear, am attained only by that devotion which is rooted in faith. Abiding love for Me purifies even eaters of dog's flesh of the taint of their birth. Assuredly neither the practice of Dharma with truthfulness and compassion, nor knowledge coupled with austerities, can thoroughly cleanse the heart that is empty of love for Me. How could there be devotion, without the hair on the body standing on end, the heart melting with love, the eyes filling with tears of joy? And without such devotion how can the heart become pure? The man who is filled with love for Me, whose voice falters with emotion, whose heart melts within him, who weeps often and sometimes laughs, who sings aloud and dances unabashed, purifies the world. Just as gold is purged of dross by fire and regains its purity, so the soul throws

¹ The words in brackets (not in the text) are based on S. See Notes.

off the residual impressions of *karma* by devotion to Me, and becomes assimilated to My essence (14-24).

When the mind is cleansed by the repeated hearing and recital of the sanctifying tale of My doings, it comes to see Reality, which is subtler than the subtlest, even as the eye gains acuity of vision by the use of medicinal ointments. The mind of the man who is constantly thinking of objects of enjoyment clings to them; the mind of him who meditates on Me merges in Me. Therefore cease thinking of pleasures, which are as unreal as dreams or reveries, and contemplate Me with a mind that has been purified by My worship. The resolute man, giving a wide berth to women, and to the men who are fond of their company, should sit down in a peaceful and secluded place and engage in unremitting meditation on Me. No association will bring him such unhappiness as the company of men who are addicted to women, and no attachment such bondage as results from attachment to women (25-30).

Uddhava asked: 'How should the aspirant for liberation meditate on Thee, O Lotus-eyed; as possessed of what attributes, and as being what in essence? Be pleased to teach me that' (31).

The Lord answered: Seated comfortably, with his body erect, on a moderately raised seat, with his hands resting on his lap, and with his eyes bent on the tip of his nose, he should train his breathing, exhaling, inhaling and retaining the breath slowly, first through one nostril, then the other, turning the senses inward. Conceiving mentally, by the control of the breath, the *Omkāra* as streaming in a line, slender and continuous as the fibre inside the lotus stalk (from the *Mūlādhāra* upward), he should invest it with a steady accented note like the peal of a bell. He should thus exercise the breath in association with the *Praṇava* ten times thrice a day; doing that he will establish control over the breath within a month. He should then meditate on the lotus of the heart within the body, which is pendant on its straight stalk, conceiving it as standing erect, with its eight petals fully open, displaying the pericarp; and he should think of the sun, the moon and fire as placed one over the other in the pericarp, and meditate on

Me as present in the heart of the fire, in the following form, which it is auspicious to contemplate. He should see Me as endowed with a figure of delicate loveliness, and let his mind linger on every limb—a figure well-proportioned, and radiating peace; with a lovely face and four long and handsome arms; exceedingly winsome, with the slender neck, sleek cheeks and the charming smile; with brilliant fish-shaped ear-pendants symmetrically placed on the two ears; clad in cloth of gold, and dark-blue like the rain-cloud; with the Srivatsa mark and the Goddess of Prosperity reposing on the breast; with conch and discus, mace and lotus, and the garland of wild flowers; with the shimmer of anklets on the feet, and the radiance of the Kausthubha jewel over all; with glittering crown and rings, girdle and armlets; taking the heart captive with the beauty of every limb and the smiling graciousness of the eyes. Resolutely withdrawing the senses from their objects by an effort of will, he should, with the help of the discriminating intellect, concentrate the mind on My form and on every several feature of it. Then, withdrawing it from all other parts of the body, he should steadily focus it on one—the smiling face that he should mentally visualize, shutting out all other thoughts. When the mind has settled on it, he should again detach it and focus it on the Prime Cause¹; then, withdrawing the mind from the contemplation of Me as the Prime Cause, he should identify himself with Me, the Pure Brahma; and cease from all thought. With his mind thus composed, he will see Me in his own soul, and he will see his own soul united with Me, the All-soul, like light merging in light. When the yogi is thus established in *samādhi*, the error of distinguishing seer, seen and the act of seeing is extinguished quite (32-46).

CHAPTER XV

YOGIC POWERS

The exalted Lord went on: Miraculous powers accrue to the yogi who has subdued his senses, establish-

¹ 'vyomni' is explained as 'parama-kāraṇe' by S.

ed control over the life-breath and steadied his mind, concentrating it on Me' (1).

Uddhava asked, 'What are the names of the supernatural powers, what is their nature, and what are the processes of concentration by which these several powers are to be had? And how many of these powers are there, O Achyuta? Tell me, for it is Thou that bestowest these powers on the yogis' (2).

The Lord said: 'Those who are adepts in yoga speak of eighteen powers and as many modes of acquiring them. Of these eight are found at their fullest in Me; the other ten arise from the heightening of the powers of *sattva*. The capacity to contract the body to atomic size; to expand it indefinitely, or to make it weightless; to partake in the enjoyments of all creatures through their senses; to possess and enjoy at will anything that may be found in other worlds or in this; to impose one's will on others and to direct their will; to remain detached while enjoying the pleasures of the senses; to attain in the highest degree any pleasure that may be desired—these eight powers are innate to Me, my good friend. Freedom from hunger and thirst and other such disabilities, the capacity to see and hear from afar, to move with the speed of the mind, to assume any form at will, to enter another's body, to put off death for as long as one pleases, to indulge in the sports of the gods, to attain whatever one resolves upon, to hold undisputed sway over all¹, as well as the ability to read past, present and future, immunity to the ill effects of the pairs of opposites, knowledge of what is passing in others' minds, the ability to arrest the power of fire, sun, water or poison, and invincibility—these, in brief, are the powers that one may obtain from concentration of mind. And now I will tell you about the different types of concentration needed for acquiring these powers, and how each of these should be practised in order to get the appropriate power (3-9).

He who meditates on Me as animating the subtle elements, his mind thus becoming moulded into the

¹ 'to hold . . . sway over all': The powers mentioned so far are the bigger ones to be obtained by the heightening of the powers of *sattva*; the others that follow are regarded as minor powers.

likeness of those elements, is said to worship them as My vesture. He obtains My power of contracting the body to the size of a *paramāṇu*. By concentrating his mind on Me as established in the Mahat¹, he attains the power of becoming as mighty as the Mahat. Likewise, by meditating on Me as present in the five gross elements severally, he obtains their characteristic qualities. The yogi, fixing his mind on Me as present in an atom of any of the gross elements, obtains the power of becoming as light as a unit of space corresponding to a *parāmaṇu* of time. Concentrating his whole mind on Me as the Controller of *sāttvika ahamkāra*, he obtains, by virtue of his whole-hearted absorption in Me, the power called *Prāpti*, which would enable him to control the senses of all creatures. He who meditates on Me as present in the Mahat as *Kriyā śakti* (power of action), which is evolved from the *Āvyakta*, obtains that highest power of Mine which is known as *Prākāśya*. Concentrating his mind on Vishnu, Lord over Māyā with its three *guṇas*, the Inner Ruler, he obtains *Īśitvam*, His power of directing and controlling the *jīvas* and their bodies². The yogi who concentrates his mind on Me, Nārāyana, the Transcendent Lord beyond the three states, known as Bhagavān, becomes imbued with My characteristic virtue (of detachment) and obtains the power known as *Vaśitvam*. Concentrating his purified mind on Me, the Brahma without attributes, he achieves the Supreme Bliss in which all desires are consummated (10-17).

The man who concentrates his mind on Me, the Lord of the White Island-continent, Who is of the nature of pure *sattva* and *Dharma*, is freed from the six disabilities and achieves brilliance of form. Meditating on Me as present in the cosmic life-breath, which pervades space, mentally associating Nāda with it, the *jīva* can hear from afar the multifarious sounds of creatures, which materialize in space. Uniting the eye with the sun and the sun with the eye, and meditating on Me as present in the conjunction, he attains the acuity of vision that enables him to see all the universe. When the

¹ In its aspect as *Jñāna-śakti*. ² The text has 'kshetra-kshetrajna-chodanām. But this *siddhi* does not confer the power of creation, etc., of the universe, which is the unique privilege of *Īśvara*.

mind, uniting itself with Me, along with the body and the life-breath, goes anywhere, there forthwith goes the body too, so powerful is the act of concentrating the mind on Me¹. Whatever form he wishes to assume he will be able to do so, using the mind-stuff, because of the puissance which concentration of the mind on Me brings. The adept who wishes to enter another body should think of himself as being therein; then leaving his own body behind, he can go with the life-breath through the outer air and enter the other body, like the flitting honey-bee. Blocking the anus with the heel, and raising the life-breath² (the adjunct of the soul) from the heart successively to the chest, the throat and the head, he may lead it through the aperture in the head to the Brahma and discard the body. If he would divert himself in the playgrounds of the gods, he should meditate on the pure *sattva* of which My form is constituted; thereupon celestial women who are *aṁśas* of *sattva* will come in aerial cars to wait on him. Whatever the man who is devoted to Me purposes to himself, that he achieves whenever he so wills, by concentrating his mind on Me, Whose Will is Truth. The man who has assimilated himself to Me, the Ever-free Ruler of all that is, will find that his authority, like Mine, is never over-ridden (18-27).

The yogi, who knows how to concentrate his purified mind on Me in the appropriate way, gains the ability to read past, present and future, including particulars of his own birth and death. Fire and the like cannot destroy the body of the sage which has been transformed by his mind dwelling on Me as immune to them, any more than the waters of the deep can harm the monsters that dwell in them. By meditating on My incarnations adorned with the Srivatsa mark, the bow, the flag, the umbrella and the chowries, he becomes invincible. The sage who thus propitiates Me by

¹ S. (alt.) 'Concentration on Me, of the mind along with the body and the life-breath, is so powerful that the body goes wherever the mind goes'. ² 'the life-breath': 'the limiting adjunct, the subtle body, of which the life-breath is the principal constituent'. 'to the Brahma': This is illustrative; he may go to any world he chooses (S.).

concentrating his mind on Me in the various ways aforesaid obtains, without exception, all the powers that I have spoken of. Indeed, what power could be beyond the reach of the sage who, having established mastery over the senses and the mind and gained control over the body and the life-breath, is absorbed in total contemplation of Me ? (28-32).

But these powers are regarded as obstacles in the way of the man who would devote himself to the highest yoga with the object of reaching Me, because they delay that consummation. All the powers with which one is born or which one obtains by the use of drugs, the practice of austerities, or by spells, may be won by thus uniting with Me in deep meditation. But none of these will take him to the goals promised by yoga. I am the sovereign Lord over all powers, being their Source and Controller ; and I am the Paramount Power too, over liberation and the knowledge that leads to it, over Dharma and over those well-versed in the teaching of the Vedas, who inculcate Dharma. I am the Ātman in all creatures, immanent and transcendent, being unconfined, even as the gross elements are present in them both within and without (33-36).

CHAPTER XVI

THE LORD'S MANIFESTATIONS

Uddhava said : 'Thou art verily the Supreme Brahma, beginningless, endless, unconfined ; Preserver and Nourisher as well as Destroyer and Creator of all creatures, O Lord. Those who are well-versed in the Vedic teaching worship Thee, Whom men who have not controlled the senses cannot know, in all creatures, high and low, as Thou truly art. Tell me, O Lord, of all those entities in which Thou manifestest Thyself, and by worshipping Thee in which with all devotion the great sages attain beatitude. Thou, O Lord, having created them, and being their Inner Ruler, movest in the world of creatures unknown to them. Deluded by Thee, they do not see Thee, the Seer. O Thou That art the abode of all glorious attributes, be pleased to tell me of all those, whether on earth, in heaven, in the

nether worlds, or anywhere in the four quarters, in whom Thou hast made strikingly manifest any of Thy powers. I offer my salutations to Thy lotus feet, the source of all that is holy' (1-5).

The Lord answered: This very question was put to Me, O best of inquirers, by Arjuna at Kurukshetra, when he had come there to fight his rivals. Labouring under the feeling that the slaying of one's own kin for a kingdom was despicable because of its unrighteousness, he would not fight; like the common run of humanity, he thought, 'Somebody will be killed, and I shall have slain him.' When I argued him out of this reluctance to kill his kinsmen, the doughty man asked Me on the battle field just what you now ask Me (6-8).

I am the Soul in all creatures, O Uddhava, their Lord and well-wisher. I am all that exists, and the cause of the coming into being of all creatures, of their life on earth, and of their death. I am the goal of all aspirants. Of the subduers, I am Time. Among virtues, I am equipoise¹. I am the essential property of every substance. Of the things constituted by the three *guṇas*, I am the *Sūtram*. I am the Mahat among the large entities, and the *jīva* among those that are infinitely small². Of all things difficult to control, I am the mind. Among the propagators of the Veda, I am Hiranyagarbha; among *mantras* I am the triform Praṇava. Among letters, I am the letter *a*, among metres, the Gāyatrī of the three feet. I am Indra among the gods, and the transmitter of the oblations (fire) among the Vasus. Among the sons of Aditi, I am Vishnu, and among the Rudras, the Black-throated One. I am Bhṛgu among the Brahmarshis, Manu among the royal sages, and Nārada among the divine ones. In the world of cows, I am the Cow of Plenty. I am Kapila among the master adepts, Suparṇa among the birds. Among the Progenitors I am Daksha, and among the manes, Aryamā. Know, O Uddhava, that among the sons of Diti, I am Prahlāda, the sovereign

¹ (alt.) Prakṛti in which all qualities (*guṇas*) are held in equilibrium.

² The *jīva*'s smallness is due to the limiting adjunct of the subtle body and its unknowability (says S., quoting Śruti.) But the Vaishnava commentators maintain that 'smallness' is what is meant here.

lord of the Asuras; that I am the moon that governs the stars and the herbage; that I am the Lord of Wealth, ruler over Yakshas and Rākshasas; that I am Airāvata among the great tusked, and Varuṇa, Lord over the monsters of the deep. Know that of all things that burn and blaze, I am the sun, and that among the sons of men I am the King. Among steeds, I am Uccaiśravas, and I am gold among the metals. Of the chastisers, I am Yama, and among the serpents I am Vāsuki. Among the mighty Nāgas, I am Ananta, and the lion among the horned and fanged creatures. I am the fourth of the *āśramas* and the first of the *varṇas*, O flawless one. Among the sanctifying streams I am the Gangā, and among the great waters I am the ocean. Of weapons I am the bow, and of bowmen, the Destroyer-of-the-three-cities. I am Meru among the great abodes, and among the impregnable fastnesses I am the Himālaya. Among trees I am the peepul, and barley among the annuals. I am Vasiṣṭha among the Purohitas, and Bṛhaspati among the supreme masters of Vedic lore. Of the leaders of hosts, I am Skanda; and among the propagators of the way of righteousness, I am the blessed Lord Aja. Among the sacrifices I am the Brahmayajna, and among vows, I am the vow of non-violence; of purifying agents I am the chief, functioning as air and as fire, as sun, water and speech. Of the limbs of yoga, I am *samādhi*. I am the state craft of the conquerors. Of the skills, I am transcendental logic¹. I am the diversity of opinion among the upholders of the different *Khyātivādas* (9-24).

Among women, I am Satarūpā, and among men, Manu the son of Svayambhū. I am Nārāyaṇa among the sages, and among the celibates I am Sanatkumāra. Of all Dharmas I am the Dharma of sanctuary. Of all havens of refuge I am the power of abstracting the mind from the external world. Among keepers of secrets, I am the kindly speech that reveals nothing. Of pairs I am Aja². Of those that are unwinkingly vigilant, I am the year. Among the seasons, I am the spring, among the months Mārgaśīrsha, and Abhijit among the fixed

¹ 'Ānvikṣhiki', the ability to distinguish between the Self and the not-Self. ² See Book III xii 49-56.

stars. I am Kṛta among the *yugas*, and among the enlightened I am Devala and Asita. Among the arrangers of the Veda I am Dvaipāyana, and among the learned I am the discriminating Śukra. Among those who possess the attributes that characterize the Bhagavān, I am Vāsudeva, and among the devotees of the Lord, who could I be but you? Among the apes, I am Hanumān, and I am Sudarśana among the Vidyādhara. I am the ruby among the gems, and among the things that are lovely, I am the lotus. Among the *darbha* grasses, I am the *kuśa*, and among the oblations, I am the clarified butter of the cow. I am the prosperity of the enterprising and the cunning throw of the gambler. I am the resignation of the patient and the courage of the doughty. I am the bodily and mental vigour of the strong; and you should know that I am the acts of piety of the Lord's devotees. Among the nine forms of the Lord that they worship, I am the first and highest. I am Viśvāvasu among the Gandharvas and Poorvachitti among the Apsaras. I am the fixedness of the mountains and the pristine smell¹ of the earth. I am the sweetness in the water, and I am fire, the first of those things that are supremely bright. I am the light that there is in the sun, the moon and the stars, and I am *Parā*, the unheard sound of *ākāśa*. Of those who are devoted to Brahmanas, I am Bali, and among warriors I am Arjuna. I am the sustainer, the creator and the destroyer of all creatures. I am the activity of the various organs of motion, speech, ejection, grasp and sexual gratification, and also of the organs of touch, sight, taste, hearing and smell; and I am, too, the power that energizes them all. I am the subtle elements of earth, air, *ākāśa*, water and fire; I am the ego, the *Mahat*, the sixteen evolutes, *Puruṣa* (jīva) and *Prakṛti*. I am Rajas, Sattva and Tamas. I am the Supreme Brahma. I am, too, the enumeration of these entities, the knowledge of their characteristic properties, and their definite determination. Nothing exists distinct from Me, whether as *Īśvara* and *jīva*, as property and substance, as bodies and souls. I might, taking an immense amount of time over it, reckon the number of

¹ It excludes bad smells (*Kram.*)

atoms in the universe. But even I cannot reckon all the manifestations of My power, creating as I do millions of cosmoses. Wherever there is prowess, opulence, renown, sovereignty, modesty, abnegation, charm, luck, strength, forbearance or knowledge, there you see a manifestation of My power (25-40).

‘I have given you a compendious but full account of these powers. They are mere mental modes, like those things which have hardly more than a verbal reality. So learn to curb the tongue and the mind, the breath and the senses, and to control the intellect, using the intellect itself in this behalf. If you do this, you will not find yourself wandering again in the maze of *samsāra*. The ascetic who does not strictly control his mind and tongue by the active exercise of his intellect will find the vows he has observed, the austerities he has practised and the gifts he has made gone to waste like water kept in an unburnt pot. Therefore he who is devoted to Me should control his mind, speech and breath by the power of his intellect, reinforced by his devotion ; doing this he will find self-fulfilment (41-44).

CHAPTER XVII

VARNA AND ĀŚRAMA DHARMAS

Uddhava prayed : ‘ Please instruct me in the Dharmas proclaimed by Thee in days far past as productive of devotion to Thee, those pertaining to people within the ambit of *varṇa* and *āśrama* as well as those applying to all men generally ; and how men should practise them if they are to inspire them with devotion to Thee, O Lotus-eyed. Though proclaimed at the very beginning, this supreme Dharma¹ that Thou, O Lord Mādhava of the mighty arm, impartedst to Brahmā in days past, taking the form of a swan, has all but disappeared from the world of men, because it all happened such an immensely long time ago. There is, except Thyself, no one on earth, or for that matter in the assembly of Brahmā, where the Vedas and other arts are present

¹ The text has *paramakam* ; practically all commentators take it as compounded of ‘ parama ’ (highest) and ‘ kam ’ (productive of happiness), i.e., the state of *moksha*.

clothed in concrete forms, who practises, protects and propagates Dharma, O Achyuta. And when Thou, O Slayer of Madhu, Who dost do all this, hast left this world, who will teach what has been lost? Therefore, O Lord That knowest all Dharma, be pleased to tell me what is the Dharma enjoined on different classes of men, by practising which they will become devoted to Thee?' (1-7).

Srī Suka said: Thus requested by the foremost of his servants, the exalted Lord Hari was pleased; and He expounded the eternal Dharmas for the welfare of mankind. The Lord said: It is a lawful and proper request that you have made, O Uddhava, for it will be conducive to the welfare of men within the fold of *varṇa* and *āśrama*. So listen while I tell you of those Dharmas. In the *Kṛta Yuga*, which opened the present *Kalpa*, all men were regarded as belonging to the *varṇa* known as the 'Hamsa'. Men were born perfect in that age, which therefore came to be known as the *Kṛta* age. In that first age, the Veda consisted solely of the *Pranava*, and I was Myself the Dharma, conceived in the form of a bull. And the men, who were free from sin, meditated on Me, the Pure, with one-pointed attention. At the beginning of the *Tretā-yuga*, O fortunate one, the three-fold Veda issued from My heart, being exhaled by Me. And from that I issued as the tripartite sacrifice. From the Virāt-purusha's mouth, arms, thighs and feet respectively, were born the Brahmana, the Kshattriya, the Vaiśya and the Sūdra, who were distinguished by their specific functions. The *āśrama* of the householder came from My loins and that of the celibate from the region below the chest; the *āśrama* of the forest-dwelling hermit came from My breast, while the origin of the renouncer's *āśrama* was in the head. The dispositions of men corresponded to the nature of the sources of their *varṇas* and *āśramas*, the lower being those who came from the lower and the higher from the higher. Tranquillity, self-discipline, reflection, purity, contentment, forbearance, straightforwardness, devotion to Me, compassion and truthfulness are qualities natural to the Brahmana. The Kshattriya's traits are valour, strength, courage, heroism, endurance, generosity, enterprise, firmness, devotion to Brahmanas, and leadership.

Faith in God, a settled disposition to philanthropy, sincerity, the service of the Brahmanas, and an endless craving for acquisition—these are the marks of the Vaiśya. Devoted and sincere service to the twice-born, the cow and the gods, and contentment with what is gained from that are the characteristics of the Sūdra. Impurity, lying, thieving, atheism, futile squabbling, lust, anger and greed are natural to those who are beyond the pale. Non-injury, truthfulness, non-appropriation of what belongs to others, freedom from lust, greed and anger, and desire to do what is good and pleasing to all creatures—these are duties that are enjoined equally on all *varṇas* (8-21).

On attaining in due course the second birth known as *upanayana*, a man of the twice-born classes shall study the Veda at the Guru's call, living a disciplined life in his household. He should be clad in deer-skin, wear the grass girdle and the sacred thread, carry the staff, the rosary of *rudrāksha* beads, the water-pot and *kuśa* grass. He should allow his hair to become matted. He must not be finical in his attention to his teeth or clothes, nor flaunt gaudily coloured seats. While bathing, eating, offering oblations in the fire, doing *japa* or answering calls of nature, he should be silent. He shall not pare his nails nor shave his hair, not even the pubic hair or the hair in the armpits (22-24).

The man who would observe Brahmacharya must not dissipate his virility. If there should occur involuntary emissions, he shall bathe, perform *prāṇāyāma* and repeat the *Gāyatri*. After purifying himself and repeating the *Gāyatri*, which he should do silently at dawn and dusk, he should worship with a collected mind the fire, the sun, his Āchārya, the cow, Brahmanas, his Guru, elders and the gods. He should look upon his Āchārya as none other than Myself, and never treat him with scant regard. He should not murmur against him, treating him as if he were an ordinary mortal; for the Guru is all-the-gods. Begging his food morning and evening, he must place it before him along with whatever else he might get; but he may continently use what he permits him to take. He shall be in constant attendance on his teacher and serve him like a lowly servitor,

following close behind when he is riding, lying down not far from him when he is asleep, waiting at his feet when he rests, and standing by with folded hands when he is sitting. Conducting himself thus, eschewing all self-indulgence and keeping his vows without a break, he should remain in the household of the Guru till his studies are completed (22-30).

If he would ascend to the world of Brahmā where the Vedas are, he should take the vow of lifelong celibacy, placing his body like a chattel at the disposal of the Guru, to go on with his study of the Veda. Purified of all dross and glowing with Brāhmic lustre, he shall worship Me, the Supreme, in the fire, in the Guru, in his own *Ātman* and in all creatures, making no distinction. Every man who is not a householder shall scrupulously avoid casting meaning glances at women, touching, talking or jesting with them; and he shall avert his gaze from creatures in coition. Maintenance of ritual purity, performance of *āchamana*, bathing, *sandhyā* worship, straightforward conduct, going on pilgrimages, practice of *japa*, and careful avoidance of what may not be touched or eaten and of those who may not be spoken to, the habit of looking upon all creatures as My abodes, and restraint of mind, speech and body—these, O Delight of your race, are rules of conduct common to all *āśramas*, (which he must observe). The Brahmana who thus observes lifelong celibacy shines like fire; if his mind is not clouded by desire, his residual impressions are burnt up by his severe austerities, and he becomes devoted to Me. He who, having absorbed the lessons of the Veda, contemplates entering the next stage of life shall take the lustral bath with his Guru's permission, after paying him the preceptor's fee. He may, according to his fitness, become a householder or a forest-dwelling hermit, or in case he is a Brahmana, renounce the world. He should exchange one *āśrama* for another¹ (the lower for the higher). He who is devoted to Me must not do otherwise (31-36).

¹ A man must not go from a higher *āśrama*, say, *vānaprastha*, to a lower, like *gṛhastha*; nor should he remain outside all *āśramas*. There is difference of opinion as to whether Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas can renounce.

The man who wishes to set up as a householder shall marry a wife who is of the same *varṇa*, and is acceptable in every way, and younger than himself; should he marry more than one wife, he must first wed one of his own *varṇa* and then the others in the order of their *varṇas*. Performance of sacrifices, study of the Veda and the giving of gifts are obligatory on all the twice-born. But the Brahmana alone may receive gifts, teach the Veda, and conduct sacrifices. If he should look upon the acceptance of gifts as detrimental to austerity and growth in spirituality, and as damaging to his good name, he may maintain himself by the other two means alone; if he regards them too as not free from blemish, he may eke out a living by gleaning ears of corn fallen in the fields. The Brahmana's body is to be desired, not for the satisfaction of trivial pleasures, but for hardships and austerities in this life and the winning of eternal happiness after death. The man whose mind dwells on Me may remain a householder if he does not cultivate undue attachment but lives contentedly, gleaning stray ears of corn from the fields and picking up unconsidered trifles dropped in the streets of shops, and discharges the important duties of his station, looking for no reward; doing this, he attains the supreme peace. Those who succour a poverty-stricken Brahmana who puts his trust in Me, I save from perils swiftly, like a ship at sea. The brave King should, father-like, rescue his subjects from distress and redeem himself too by his own efforts, as does the lord of the elephant herd. Such a King sheds all his sins here, and ascending by an aerial car that shines like the sun, rejoices in the company of Indra (37-46).

The Brahmana in distress may support himself by trading in things that are lawful; in an extremity he may take to arms for a living, but should never take to menial service. The Kshattriya may follow the occupation of the Vaiśya or, in extreme straits, live by the chase, or take to some Brahmanical occupation, but not to menial service. The Vaiśya may practise the Sūdra's occupation, and the Sūdra that of a mechanic or a weaver of mats. But a man who is no longer under compelling necessity should not prefer to remain in any occupation

which he could be blamed for following in the ordinary course (47-49).

Every day, the householder shall, according to his capacity, worship the gods, the sages, the manes, the lower creation and men, by the offering of oblations in the fire, the recital of the Veda, the offering of oblations and water libations, of *bali*, and of food and water respectively, looking upon them all as My manifestations. With such wealth as chance brings his way or which he has earned by honest means, he shall offer sacrifices in a proper manner, without causing hardship to his dependants. Though living the family life, he should remain unattached, and should never lose sight of the goal. The wise man should realize that even the unseen world is as transitory as the visible world. The company of children, spouses, friends and relations is like the chance meeting of wayfarers ; with every body they come and go, as dreams come and go with sleep. Reflecting thus, he will live in the family unfettered, like a chance guest ; no longer entertaining such notions as ' me ' and ' mine ', the home will no longer be the house of bondage for him (47-54).

The man who is devoted to Me will have been but worshipping Me in doing his duties thus as a householder. He may continue in that state of life, or he may become a hermit in the forest : or, if he have issue, renounce the world. But the hen-pecked fool, who is attached to house and home and ever intent on augmenting his family and fortune, is deluged by petty cares ; entertaining such notions as ' me ' and ' mine ', he falls into bondage. ' Alas ! I have old parents, my wife has a young family to support ; and how will my babes live, unfriended without me, miserable and grief-stricken ? ' When the silly man, thus distracted by thoughts of home, and obsessed by his insatiate longings, dies, he passes into intense darkness (55-58).

CHAPTER XVIII

THE HERMIT AND THE RENOUNCER

The Lord went on : He who would become a hermit should go to live in the forest, leaving his wife under the

care of his sons, or taking her with him ; there he should spend the third¹ part of his life in peace. He shall subsist on forest produce—roots, tubers and fruits that are fit to be eaten—and wear tree bark, or attire made of grass or leaves, or deer-skin. He shall allow the hair on the head and the body, his beard and his nails to grow. He should not elaborately clean his teeth. Thrice a day he shall take a dip, and he shall lie down on the bare ground. In summer, he shall subject himself to the heat of the five fires ; during the rains, expose himself to torrential down-pours ; in winter, remain plunged up to the neck in water ; in this wise, he shall practise austerities. He shall eat what has been cooked over a fire or has ripened in the natural course, what has been pounded in a mortar or powdered with a stone ; or he may use his teeth for a mortar. He shall himself gather all the food that he needs, with due regard to time, place and his own strength ; he shall not eat what has not been gathered fresh. With oblations of boiled and ground wild grain, he shall offer the seasonal sacrifices. But the forest-dwelling hermit must not worship Me with the animal sacrifices enjoined in the Veda. Agnihotra, Darśa and Poornamāsa, as well as the Chāturmāsya, have been traditionally held by experts in the Veda to be obligatory on the hermit, as on those in the earlier stage of life. The hermit, whose veins stand out all over his body, having propitiated Me, the embodiment of all austerities, by such penances, passes through the worlds of the *rshis* and attains Me. What could be more foolish than the utilizing for trivial pleasures of austerities which are attended with such hardships and which can win for one the supreme good ! If he becomes unequal to the rigour of the discipline, his body falling into a perpetual tremor by reason of age, he shall lodge the sacred fires in his heart and burn himself to death, concentrating his mind on Me (I-II).

Whenever he develops a distaste for the worlds of enjoyment, which are the fruits of *karma* and which are at the core no better than hell, he may resign the fire-rites and renounce. After worshipping Me with the ordained rites, and giving away all he has to the chief

¹ i.e. up to his seventy-fifth year.

priest who conducts them, he shall lodge the fires in himself, and go forth as a wandering mendicant wanting nothing. The gods, in the form of his wife and the rest, will without a doubt interpose obstacles in the way of the Brahmana who would renounce, thinking, 'This man will pass beyond us and attain the Supreme Brahma.' If the ascetic would wear a cloth other than the cod-piece, it should be no bigger than what would just suffice to hide it from view; and he shall carry none of the things that he had given up, nor anything else but staff and water-pot, except in dire straits. He should step on ground which his eyes have examined, drink water which has been purified by (straining with) a cloth, speak words which truth has consecrated, and do what his thoughtful mind approves¹. Silence, renunciation of interested activity, and control of the breath are the restraints laid on speech, body and mind respectively; he who has not achieved them does not become a renouncer, My friend, merely by carrying a staff (12-17).

He shall beg his food from four classes, asking alms of only seven houses, chosen at random, which are free from blemish; he must be content with what he gets thus. Going to some sheet of water outside the village, and taking his bath, he shall sanctify the food and silently eat all that he has obtained, after making the prescribed offerings. He shall wander the earth a solitary, without attachments, keeping his senses under control, finding diversion and delight in the Self, calm and equable. Resorting to a secluded and peaceful place, the ascetic shall meditate on his Self with a mind purified, regarding It as one with Me, without any difference (18-21).

He shall, in the light of steady knowledge, repeatedly examine the causes of bondage and release; he will see that distraction caused by the senses is bondage, and their conquest is freedom. Victorious over the six foes, averse to petty pleasures, having found infinite happiness within himself, the sage should live seeing Me in all things. He shall betake himself to regions where there are holy places, rivers, mountains, forests and hermitages; entering market towns, villages, cow-

¹ These are rules for the orders of ascetics known as Bahūdaka, Kutichaka, and so on, not for the Paramahamsas who are above rule.

colonies and caravanserais to solicit alms. Let him beg his food mostly in the settlements of forest-dwelling hermits; by eating grain gleaned from the fields, his mind will become pure and free from delusion, and he will quickly attain freedom. He should not look upon the world of phenomena as real; what is objective is perishable. So let him keep himself free from attachment to this world or the next and cease from striving for willed ends. Realizing by cogent reasoning that the world and the physico-psychic complex, and all else that derive from them, are mere appearances projected on the Self, he should rest in the Self and dismiss them from his mind (22-27).

He¹ who, being disgusted with the world, is intent on the knowledge that liberates, or is so devoted to Me that he harbours no desire² whatever, shall give up, along with the external marks³ of his order, his attachment thereto, but continue in the observance of its duties, without being a slave to rule and prohibition. Though enlightened, he will entertain himself like a child; though accomplished, he will behave like an idiot; though learned, he will talk like a madman; though well-versed in the teaching of the Veda, he will feed like a cow⁴. He must not give his attention to Vedic exegesis, nor should he live like the heretics. Let him not pin his faith to dialectics, or take sides in barren disputations 28-30).

The wise man should not fear the populace; nor should he give it cause to fear him. He should put up with offensive words, and he must slight no one. He should not, animal-like, quarrel with others on account of the body. For the Supreme Ātman, One and One only, is in all creatures as well as in him, like the one moon in many water-vessels; and all bodies are essentially one. The man of fortitude should not be dejected if he gets no food at times, nor should he rejoice when he does, since both happen as Providence wills. He should indeed make an effort to get food. It is right and proper that he should sustain life; only if he lives can a man

¹ This and the following verses speak of the Paramahansa

² Not even for *moksha*. ³ The triple staff, etc., which denote the other three classes of recluse. ⁴ i.e., live by no fixed rule or *āchāra*.

reflect on the Truth, and realizing it, be freed. But let him eat what comes to him by chance, be it good or bad ; likewise, with regard to clothing or bedding, let the sage take what he finds. The enlightened man should do the cleansing of the body, the performance of *āchamana*, bathing and other such prescribed acts, not because they are prescribed, but of his own free choice, even as I, Lord of the universe, do. For the sense of difference is no longer in him. What there was, was destroyed when he realized Me in his heart. Till such time as his body falls, he will occasionally be dimly aware of it. Then he will be one with Me (31-37).

The man of steady will¹, who is disgusted with pleasures that end in sorrow, but has not inquired into the means of attaining Me, should put himself in the hands of a Guru, who has thought long and to the purpose on these matters. He should serve the teacher with unenvious devotion and zeal, looking upon him as none other than Me, till he realizes the Brahma. The man who has not subdued the six enemies, whose will is bogged down in worldly pleasures, and who has neither knowledge nor detachment, but lives by flaunting the triple staff, is a murderer of *dharma*. He cheats the gods, his own self, and Me, Who dwell in him ; with all his attachments remaining undestroyed, he loses both this world and the next. It is incumbent on the renouncer to cultivate tranquillity and the disposition to non-injury ; it is the duty of the hermit to practise austerities and to inquire into the truth of things ; the householder has the obligation to look after all creatures and to offer sacrifices ; the *Brahmachāri* has to serve his teachers. The householder should practise continence, consorting with his wife only in the prescribed periods ; he should cultivate austerity, purity, contentment and loving kindness towards all creatures. And those who belong to every *āśrama* should worship Me. The man who thus worships Me always by faithfully observing his own *dharma*, giving his exclusive devotion to Me, and seeing

¹ The foregoing having dealt with the man who, disillusioned with the world, and having discursive knowledge of the One Reality, had taken to *sannyāsa* to realize it, this verse and the following deal with the man who is disillusioned but who is yet to acquire knowledge.

Me in all creatures, quickly comes to love Me with a great love. By virtue of such constant devotion, O Uddhava, he comes very near to Me, the Supreme Overlord of all the worlds, the Cause of the creation and destruction of all creatures, and the Origin of the Veda. His heart purified by the practice of his own *dharma*, he comes to realize My puissance, and attaining knowledge and illumination, becomes one with Me forthwith (38-46).

This is the *Dharma* of those who are within the fold of *varṇa* and *āśrama*, and it is distinguished by the performance of *karma*. The same, when directed by devotion to Me, becomes the supreme instrument of liberation. And now I have answered your question, my good friend, how a man may by faithfully following his *dharma* become devoted to Me, the Supreme Lord, and attain Me (47-48).

CHAPTER XIX

DISCIPLINES THAT AID DEVOTION

The Lord went on : The man who has realized the Self, as a result of knowledge ripening into experience¹ instead of remaining merely intellectual apprehension, will see that the universe of duality and the knowledge that negates it are both illusions projected on Me, and he will relinquish both into My hands². For it is Me that the enlightened man wants ; I am the fruit of his endeavour, and I am, too, the means to it that he favours. I am heaven to him and liberation also ; he loves no goal or way but Me. Those who have found fulfilment through knowledge and enlightenment, know Me in My essential being. I prize the *jñāni* most because it is by virtue of his realization of Me as his own soul that he remains absorbed in Me. Penance, pilgrimage, the practice of *japa*, the making of gifts, and other means of purifying oneself do not bring one that fulfilment which comes with even a modicum of knowledge. Therefore, O Uddhava, engaging in the pursuit of knowledge till it results in realizing Me, as your own Self, you should,

¹ (v.r.) 'knowledge clarified and confirmed by logic and ripened into experience' (S.). ² This is known as 'vidvat-sannyāsa'.

thus possessed of both knowledge and Self-experience, give yourself wholly to My adoration in the spirit of loving devotion. By worshipping Me, the Supreme Ātman and the Lord of the sacrifice, in their own souls with their knowledge and experience, the sages attained in Me their fruition (1-6).

The threefold change that appears in you, O Uddhava, is an illusion; for it is seen neither at the beginning nor at the end but in-between. If that is subject to birth and death, what is that to you? What exists before the unreal appears and after it disappears exists in the interim also (7).

Uddhava prayed, 'Be pleased to expound to me at length, O Lord of the worlds That hast the universe for Thy form, this pure and primordial wisdom that goes with non-attachment and knowledge, and also the way of devotion by which one may gain Thee, that way which eludes even the mighty. For the man who is beset on all sides by the three kinds of suffering, and burns in anguish on the dread and dolorous way of birth and death, I can see no refuge, O Lord, but the umbrage of Thy nectar-showering feet. Lift up this creature out of Thy abundant compassion, O magnanimous One, fallen into the pit, bitten by the serpent time, yet thirsting inordinately for trivial pleasures. Drench him with the life-giving message of freedom' (8-10).

The Lord said: Bhīṣma, foremost of the upholders of Dharma, was once questioned about the same matter by King Ajātaśatru when we were all present. When the Bhārata war was over, he, being grief-stricken over the death of kith and kin, questioned him in regard to the *dharma*s that lead to liberation, after having heard his exposition of many other kinds of *Dharma*. I shall tell you of them as I heard Devavrata describe them, and shall also speak of the enlightenment, detachment, knowledge, faith and devotion that go with them. I hold that to be knowledge which enables a man to realize that the nine¹, eleven, five and three *tattvas* are implicit

¹ The Sāṅkhyan *tattvas* as here reckoned are twenty-eight—Prakṛti, Puruṣa, Mahat, Ahaṁkāra, the five subtle elements, the eleven organs (including the mind), the five gross elements and the three *guṇas*.

as causes in all created things, and that the One¹ is likewise present in each of these *tattvas*. *Vijnāna* (enlightenment) comes with the further realization that there are no different *tattvas* informed by the One First Cause, but that they are all really but the One Brahma Itself². He should see that the *tattvas*, being constituted by the threefold *guṇas*, are subject to such vicissitudes as duration, creation and destruction, and that That Which is concomitantly present in an evolving principle when it comes into existence and when it passes into its evolute, as well as in the interim, and Which alone remains when they are all re-absorbed, is the only reality. When he realizes that diversity is contradicted by *Śruti*, perception, the traditional wisdom, and inference, he repudiates it. The wise man should see that, all *karmas* being contrived effects, all joys of the unseen worlds, including Brahmā's, must be as fleeting as those of this, and as full of misery (11-18).

I have already spoken to you of *Bhakti Yoga*, O flawless one. But as you take delight in it, I shall again tell you of the prime means of cultivating devotion to Me. Eagerness to hear My deathless tale again and again and to expatiate on it; zeal for My worship, the hymning of My glories and solicitous assistance at My worship; falling down at My feet, all the limbs touching the ground; showing marked honour to My devotees; seeing Me in all creatures; doing all acts for My sake, making all speech an occasion for praising Me; dedicating the mind to Me, and renouncing all desires; relinquishing for Me wealth, the gratification of the senses and the joys of home; offering sacrifices, giving gifts, making oblations in the fire, doing *japa*, keeping vows and practising austerities, all with the desire to please Me—by following these *dharma*s that are appropriate to men who would dedicate themselves to Me, there rises love in their hearts for Me. What more can such a man want? If he dedicates his mind, tranquil and charged with goodness, to (Me) the Ātman, he gains *dharma*, *jñāna* and dispassion, as well as all opulence and

¹ The realization that the world is essentially one with Him is knowledge. ² The realization that the Brahma is not different from one's own soul is enlightenment.

power. But if the mind is absorbed by the world of diversity, and chases pleasures, it falls into restless activity and becomes addicted to unworthy objects, and the result would be the reverse. What makes for devotion to Me is spoken of as the highest *dharma*; the realization of Me as the One Self in all beings is the highest *jñāna*; indifference to the objects of enjoyment is the highest dispassion, and the possession of the eight-fold supernatural attributes, the highest puissance (19-27).

Uddhava asked: 'How many different kinds of *yama* and *niyama* are there, O Terror of the foe? What are the marks of 'śama' and 'dama', of patience and firmness, O Lord? What is a true gift? What is meant by austerities? Wherein lies heroism? What do *satyam* and *ṛtam* signify? What is to be considered as abnegation? Which sort of wealth is worthy of honour? How would you define *yajña* and *dakṣiṇā*? Whence comes strength, O Gracious Lord? What is good fortune, and what true gain, O Keśava? What is the highest knowledge? What should make one feel ashamed of oneself? What constitutes true adornment? And what is happiness, what misery? Who is the wise man, and who the fool? What is the right path, and what constitutes deviation from it? What are heaven and hell? Who is the true friend, and what deserves to be called home? Who is the rich man, and who the pauper? Who is the lowly creature, who the Lord and master? Tell me of these things, O Protector of the good, and also of their opposites' (28-32).

The Lord answered: Non-injury, truthfulness, non-covetousness, non-attachment, modesty, non-accumulation, faith in Dharma¹, continence, silence, firmness, patience and fearlessness—these are the internal disciplines (*yama*), which go with the following external restraints (*niyama*)—purity (internal and external), the doing of *japa* and penance, the offering of oblations in the fire, zeal for Dharma, hospitality, performance of My worship, going on pilgrimages, getting and spending solely in the interests of others, contentment, and service to the Āchārya; there are, thus, twelve of each kind. These, faithfully adhered to, yield whatever a man wishes,

¹ The original has 'āstikyam'.

my son. *Sama* is the anchoring of the discriminating mind in Me ; *dama* consists in the subduing of the senses; patience lies in uncomplaining endurance of the hardships involved in the doing of one's duties ; firmness means resolute suppression of the palate and the carnal urges. Renunciation of the impulse to do harm to living creatures is the highest of gifts; indifference to enjoyments, the true austerity. Repression of one's own instinctive tendencies is heroism. Contemplation of the Brahma is *satya* ; truthful and kindly speech is what the wise mean by *ṛta*. *Saucha*¹ means non-attachment to the fruits of *karma* ; while *tyāga* is renunciation of the world. Dharma is the only wealth that is worthy of honour. I, the Supreme Lord, am the *yajna* ; and the imparting of the knowledge that liberates is the payment of *dakṣiṇā*². Strength comes from the control of the breath. The attributes of sovereign power and the rest, which inhere in Me, are the only true fortune ; and devotion to Me is the highest gain. Knowledge consists in the realization that the appearance of difference in the Ātman is unreal. The thought of wrongdoing is what one must feel ashamed of. Virtues are the true adornment. To rise above joys and sorrows is happiness. It is the hankering after enjoyments that is misery. He is the man of wisdom who knows the true nature of bondage and of freedom. The fool is he who identifies himself with the body and possessions. That is the true path, which leads to Me ; to allow the mind to be distracted is to take the wrong path. The predominance of *sattva* in one's nature is heaven, of ignorance hell. The Guru is the true friend, and he is none but Me, comrade. The human body is the home ; good qualities are the only riches. He is the pauper who knows no contentment. He who has not subdued the

¹ *Tyāga* is distinguished from *śaucha*, though Uddhava had not specifically asked about the latter. ² The translation (which is literal) follows S. and one or two other commentators. But others object, with justification, that the priest who receives fees from the sacrificer does not receive knowledge from him ; while in the other case of payment of fees by the student to the teacher, it is the former that receives knowledge, not the latter. So they take the words to mean 'the loving and humble service which induces the Guru to impart instruction.'

senses is the man to be pitied. He whose mind is not the slave of his desires is master of himself ; the reverse is true of him who is bogged down in pleasures. All the questions that you raised, O Uddhava, have now been dealt with in a way that you should find useful. But why go on endlessly ? What is wrong is the disposition to see good and evil ; what is right is the habit of mind that sees neither (33-45).

CHAPTER XX

KARMA, JNĀNA AND BHAKTI YOGAS

Uddhava again questioned the Lord : ' Injunctions and prohibitions are, surely, the commandments, known as the Veda, that Thou, the Supreme Lord, hast issued. (In laying them down), the Veda pays regard to the merits and de-merits that characterize different *karmas*, to those that account for the distinctions made between the different *varṇas* and *āśramas* and between *anuloma* and *pratiloma* classes (in regard to performance of *karmas*), and to those that determine the rightness or otherwise of substance¹, place, age and time, as well as the result, be it heaven or hell. If one may not distinguish between good and evil, what happens to Thy ordinances consisting of rule and prohibition ? But for Thy commandments, how could men hope to achieve the supreme good ? Thy Veda, O Supreme Lord, is the unfailing eye that reveals to the manes, the gods and men alike, objectives that are beyond the perception of the senses, as well as the knowledge of means and ends. The distinction that one makes between good and evil is based, not on one's private judgment, but on Thy Word. How then could Thine own Word negate the distinction ? That is what confuses me ' (1-5).

The Lord answered : I have taught three ways whereby men may attain the highest good—the Way of Knowledge, the Way of Works and the Way of Devotion ; there is none other whatsoever. Of these, the Way of Knowledge will bring fulfilment to those who, being disillusioned with *karma*, renounce it ; the Way of

¹ The different elements involved in the offering of sacrifices, the typical *karma* with which the Veda is concerned.

Works will serve those who are not disgusted with it, since they have not lost their relish for the fruits of *karma*. If a man happens by good fortune to become an eager listener to the tale of My glories, and is but moderately attracted by sense pleasures, though he has not developed distaste for them, the Way of Devotion will lead him to the goal. One should go on doing *karmas* so long as one is neither disillusioned with the world nor eager to listen to the tale of My exploits. The man who is faithful to his own duties and who worships Me by offering sacrifices without desire for the fruits thereof, but refrains from all other *karmas*, will go neither to heaven nor to hell, Uddhava. Adhering to his own *dharma*, remaining blameless and pure, he will attain in this very life, the knowledge that liberates; and, if he is fortunate, will become devoted to Me. Those who sojourn in heaven are as eager as those in hell to be born as men, since thus they could attain knowledge and devotion; the other worlds are of no help in this matter. The intelligent man will, however, want neither heaven nor hell, nor birth here again as a man. Should he fall in love with the human body, he would lose sight of the goal. Realizing that the body is mortal, though it can help one to the goal, he should strive with all vigilance to gain freedom before death comes. The bird that sees the forest tree in which it has made its nest being cut down by men who come like death, deserts its home, untroubled by attachment, and escapes to safety. The man who is seized with fear and trembling, seeing that life is being hacked at day and night, renounces all attachments; and when he realizes the Supreme, quietly lays down his life, having no other desire. The man who has obtained the best of boats, this human body—the source of all felicity, which it is so difficult to procure by one's own efforts, but which by luck¹ is at his service, and which has the Guru for its helmsman and Me for a favouring wind—and yet does not cross the ocean of birth and death, is indeed the destroyer of his own soul (6-17).

The man who is weary of the Way of Works, and disillusioned, should, resorting to yoga, get the senses under control and still the mind by focussing it on the

¹ (*lit.*): 'got easily' (sulabham).

Self by repeated practice. When the mind breaks loose as he is trying to steady it and plunges into distraction, he should, while allowing it to go its own way for a while, be alert to re-establish control; he should never relax his vigilance. Controlling the life-breath and the senses, he should make the mind amenable to his will by the force of his intelligence established in *sattva*¹. This method of controlling the mind, which is that of the rider who is bent on eventually getting his own way with a refractory steed, is spoken of as the highest yoga. Using his knowledge of the *tattvas*, he should follow with his mind step by step the process of creation by evolution and destruction by involution till his mind is stilled (18-22).

When the man who is disgusted with the world and disillusioned, begins reflecting on the Guru's teaching and meditates on its purport again and again, his mind rids itself of its evil obsession. By the practice of *yama* and other stages of yoga, by seeking the knowledge that discriminates between the Self and the non-Self, or by worshipping and meditation on Me, the mind should learn to dwell on Me, the supreme goal of yoga; it should not adopt any other means. If the yogi should be led by heedlessness into doing what is blameable, he should burn up his sin by knowledge itself; he should do naught² else. Firm adherence to what a man has the competence to do is alone good for him. Since all *karmas* are by their nature impure, the scope of resort to them has been restricted by describing some as good, others as bad, with a view to inducing the renunciation of attachments (23-26).

The man who has developed eagerness to hear My glories sung, and is disgusted with all *karmas*, but is unable to get over his longing for the fruits, though he knows that they must end in sorrow, should lovingly worship Me with zeal and firm faith, blaming the life

¹ The purposeful intellect, reinforced by *sāttvika-ahamkāra*, would be a powerful ally of the will (R.) ² Such as acts of expiation. The man who has launched on *jñāna-yoga* should not resort to *karma*. The reason (stated in the next verse) is that all impurity stems from the basic tendency to *pravṛtti*. Curbing this is the only lasting remedy.

of pleasure as bound for grief, even while continuing to live that life. The desires that linger in the heart are extinguished when the wise man constantly worships Me in the modes afore described, with loving devoutness, since I, the All, am lodged in his heart. When he thus realizes Me, the soul in all creatures, the knot of the heart snaps, all doubts are dispelled and all *karmas* dissipated. Therefore, for the yogi who loves Me and whose mind ever dwells on Me, neither knowledge nor renunciation is the means to attain the supreme good in this life. What may be obtained by the performance of *karmas* or the practice of austerities, by *māna* or renunciation, by yoga, the giving of gifts, the doing of meritorious works or other virtuous acts, may all be easily won by My devotee from his devotion to Me alone; and he could have heaven, liberation and entry to My abode¹ too, if he cared for any of these things. But the good and wise men who love Me with an exclusive love would not want anything, be it *Kaivalyam* itself here and now, even if I should offer it to them. Independence of wants is said to be the highest and greatest good, as well as the means thereto. So devotion to Me comes naturally to the man who harbours² no desires and asks for nothing. The consequences attaching to injunctions and prohibitions do not touch those who give their exclusive devotion to Me, who are instinct with pure goodness and have won equanimity and attained Me, Who am beyond the reach of the intellect. Thus, those who follow these ways of reaching Me, which I have taught, attain the sanctuary of My world, and they also know the Supreme Brahma (27-37).

CHAPTER XXI

QUALITIES OF SUBSTANCES ETC.

The exalted Lord went on: Those who abandon the ways of devotion, knowledge and works that I have described and indulge their impermanent senses in the enjoyment of trivial pleasures, fall into the trans-

¹ Vaikuntha. ² S. (alt.) 'who asks for nothing, because he has no desires.'

migratory life. I have already pointed out that steadfast adherence to the Dharma that is proper to a man is what is good for him ; its opposite is evil. This applies to both¹ equally. Even among things of the same order, some are characterized as pure, suitable and beneficial, others as impure, flawed and harmful, in order to induce reflection² on these distinctions. I have instituted this triple distinction³ for the guidance of those who bear the burden of Dharma, in dealing with questions involving the practice of Dharma, the conduct of affairs, and the needs of self-preservation respectively (1-4).

Earth, water, fire, air and *ākāśa* are the five causes that go to the making of the bodies of all creatures, from Brahmā down to the world of inanimate things, and are present therein along with the *Ātman*. Different names and forms⁴ are imposed by the Veda, O Uddhava, on bodies that are essentially alike, in order that all creatures may realize the ends of life. Even in regard to time, place, and so on, as well as to materials, I⁵ have laid down distinctions as to what is suitable and what is not, with a view to restricting the performance of *karmas*. That region where the black buck is not found is impure ; more so if the people there are not devoted to Brahmanas. Even if a region excels by reason of the presence therein of the black buck, it should be regarded as impure if it falls within the countries known as *Keekata* and good men do not live there, if the bulk of the inhabitants are outside the pale of *varṇa* and *āśrama*, or if the soil is saline. The time that is suitable for *karma* is that which is prescribed, or in which the needed materials are available. The time that is unsuitable is that which is unpropitious for the performance of *karma*, or positively ruled out for that purpose (5-9).

A substance may be made pure or impure by another

¹ 'both' : good and evil. ² leading to the conclusion that one's natural impulse to *Pravṛtti* should be curbed. ³ Absolute standards based on good and evil are relevant in the world of ethics, while in politics one must be guided by the test of suitability of methods, and in emergencies by their effectiveness.

⁴ The classification of *varṇa*, *āśrama*, and so on, and other restrictions and prohibitions are all aimed ultimately at progressively curbing involvement in the external life. ⁵ Through Manu and other law-givers.

substance. Its purity may be determined by authoritative opinion. It may be effected by an act, or by lapse of time ; it may depend on whether it is big or small, or whether one can or cannot do without it, on one's state of knowledge, or one's means. Whether the violation of these interdicts would be sinful would also depend on place and circumstances. Grain and wooden utensils, ivory, cloth, oily substances, precious metals, skins and all things made of earth are purified by air, fire, earth and water singly or in combination, and with the passage of time, as laid down in the Sāstras. Whatever removes the smell or the dirt from anything that has been smeared with filth and restores it to its normal condition is its purifier and should be used till it effects its purpose. The taking of a bath, the giving of gifts, the practice of austerities, the attainment of the proper age and capacity, the receiving of sacraments, the performance of obligatory rites, and meditation on Me, are the various means¹ of effecting self-purification that one must resort to before beginning (obligatory) *karmas*. Purifying himself in the appropriate way, the twice-born should engage in the performance of the particular *karma*. A *mantra* is pure when it is properly learnt. To dedicate an action to Me is to purify it. Dharma is achieved when the six conditions² under which a *karma* is done are pure ; *adharma*, when they are not. What is right may in certain circumstances be wrong ; what is wrong may, if enjoined as a duty, become right. The rules that declare what is right and what is wrong thus show only that the distinction is based on no intrinsic difference. An act that might degrade one man would not, if done by another who is already fallen, result in further fall for him. Sexual intercourse, where it is natural and expected, is a duty. He who lies down on the ground cannot fall³. (10-17).

Whatever a man gives up, that he is freed from. The observance of this law puts an end to sorrow, fear and delusion and delivers men from bondage. Attributing delectable qualities to the objects of the senses, men are attracted to them. Attraction begets desire ; desire leads to strife, which makes one fall into wild raging,

¹ See Bk. X Ch. v 4. ² Time, place, substance, agent, the *mantra* used and the act of purification. ³ c.f. Bunyan : 'He who is down can know no fall.'

and that ends in the mind's stupefaction. The pervasive power of the discriminating intelligence is overwhelmed. Bereft of that power, the creature is reduced to a cypher, my good friend. Being as good as dead, he forfeits all chances of realizing the supreme end of life. Immersed in the life of pleasure, he knows neither himself nor another, leading a futile vegetable existence, drawing breath like the bellows (18-22).

The benefits promised in the Vedas are not to be regarded as the supreme end of life. With the intention of ultimately declaring *moksha* as the goal, the Veda puts out these promises, which are calculated, like the promise of sweets to make children take medicine, to induce men to perform *karma*. Men are by nature addicted to enjoyments, and they cling to life and to their kith and kin. All this must lead to their undoing. How could the all-knowing Veda wish to induce those who do not know their own good, who wander in the maze prompted by desires, and fall into the depths of darkness, but who humbly heed its counsel, to persist in the pursuit of such pleasures? Not understanding the true inwardness of the Vedic teaching, some stupid men mis-represent the attractive benefits promised, as being the supreme good; those who know the Veda do not say so. Men who are distracted by desires, miserable and racked by greed, mistake the flower for the fruit. Be-mused by their faith in the fire-rites, and destined to go the smoky way, they do not know their own Self. These panegyrists of *karma*, who are intent on pampering the flesh, are like mist-blinded men; they do not see Me—from Whom the universe came and apart from Whom it does not exist—though I am seated in their hearts, My friend. Not knowing My real view (which is hidden from them) that if there are men who (in the pursuit of their desires) are positively in love with cruelty, they might be permitted to go in for sacrifices, but it is no directive, these unscrupulous people, who hanker after pleasure and delight in cruelty, slaughter animals for the satisfaction of their own appetites, offering them up as sacrifices to the gods and the manes and the lords of the elementals. Aiming to gain the other world, dreamlike and unreal and only pleasant from hearsay, and to realize their

wishes in this world, they spend their substance as the trader¹ does. Being wedded to *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, they devote themselves to the worship of Indra and other gods, who likewise delight in the products of *rajas*, *sattva* and *tamas*; they do not intend it in their hearts as worship offered to Me. 'Having propitiated the gods here with sacrifices, we shall go and enjoy ourselves in heaven, and when that enjoyment ends, we shall again be born into this world as householders and members of great families.' Men whose minds are unsettled by such flowery fictions, who are haughty and full of pride, do not care even to hear about Me (23-34).

The Vedas in all their three parts adhere to the doctrine that the *Ātman* is the Brahma Itself. The Vedas speak in riddles, and I myself love indirect statement. The Veda is exceedingly difficult of comprehension when it is implicit in the cosmic life-breath, the mind and the sense-organ; it is infinite.² Plumbless as the ocean in its depth, it baffles the understanding. Only enlightened men can perceive its presence in all creatures in the form of *nāda*, like the fibre inside the lotus-stalk, governed by Me, the Omnipresent and Omnipotent Brahma. As the spider spews out of its mouth the thread that is within itself, so does the Lord³ conditioned by the adjunct of the cosmic life-breath, Who is ever-blissful, and Who (as *Hiraṇyagarbha*) is the embodiment of the Veda, create from the Void of the heart out of the stuff of *nāda*, through the instrumentality of the mind, which fashions the body of consonants, etc., the articulate Veda which issues through numberless channels in the shape of consonants, vowels, aspirates and labials, differentiated and manifested from the subtle *Prāṇava*; which has a huge and varied vocabulary; which employs many metres—*Gāyatrī*, *Ushṇik*, *Anuṣṭup*, *Bṛhatī*, *Panktī*, *Trishtup*, *Āgātī*, *Aticchandās*, *Ātyashtī*, *Atijagat* and *Virāt*—each successive one containing four syllables more than the earlier—and which is limitless in its vastness. And in due course, He

¹ The trader intent on gain, risks his all in trading with distant countries. ² See Ch. XII Notes. ³ *Brahmā*, when He begins the act of creation.

withdraws it into Himself again. None but Me in this world knows the real purport of the Veda—what exactly it enjoins¹, what it makes known, or what alternatives it poses and distinguishes. It is Me that it enjoins; it is Me that it proclaims; and it is about Me that it poses various alternative propositions, only to negate them in due course. This is the sum and substance of all the Veda, that it bases itself on Me, and explains all difference as due to Māyā, and its task is done when it has negated it (35-43).

CHAPTER XXII

THE PRINCIPLES OF SĀNKHYA

Uddhava asked: 'How many are the *tattvas*, O Lord, which have been reckoned by the sages? We have heard Thee say that they are nine *plus* eleven *plus* five *plus* three. Some have said that they are twenty-six, others twenty-five; and yet others have spoken of them variously as being seven, nine, six, four, eleven, seventeen, sixteen or thirteen. What could be the object of the sages in setting out so many different views of the total number of *tattvas*? Be pleased to explain, O Lord Everlasting' (1-3).

The Lord explained: All that the Brahmanas say is right from their different points of view; for all the *tattvas* are implicit in every one of them. What is there that it is impossible for them to maintain, who grant that My Māyā is real? 'It is not as you say; what I say is the truth'; if men dispute among themselves thus, basing themselves on different premises, that is because they succumb to My irresistible powers.² The irreconcilable mental attitudes of the disputants, caused by the disturbance of the equilibrium of those powers, subside with the establishment of self-discipline and the subduing of the senses, and then all disputes end. Because all *tattvas* enter into each other, O best of men, they may be reckoned as few or many,

¹ See Notes. ² The three *guṇas*, which by their various permutations and combinations, determine the different and conflicting minds of the disputants. For discussion of other points raised in this chapter, see Notes.

according to the speaker's predilections. In every *tattva*, whether it is cause or effect, all the others are implicit. We will accept what every one of the disputants affirms, as to which *tattva* should be regarded as cause and which effect, and also as to what the total number of *tattvas* is, since all of them follow logically from their own premises (4-9).

Since the *jīva*, being subject to beginningless nescience, cannot by his own effort attain knowledge of the Self, there should be another who knows the truth of the Self and can impart it to him. On the other hand, it might be said that there is not an atom of difference in this respect between *Purusha* (*jīva*) and *Īśvara*, and it is futile to seek to make out that the two are completely different entities. As regards knowledge of the Self, it might be argued that that is ultimately a product of *Prakṛti*. For *Prakṛti* is the state of equilibrium of the three *guṇas*; the *guṇas* thus belong to *Prakṛti*, not to the *Ātman*; and they, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, are the cause of the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe. Therefore knowledge (under this classification) is regarded as of the nature of *sattva*, *karma* as a mode of *rajas*, and nescience, of *tamas*. He who causes the disturbance of the equilibrium of the *guṇas* is called *kāla* (time). And *svabhāva* (innate disposition) is only the Mahat (10-13).

The nine *tattvas* that I spoke of are *Purusha*, *Prakṛti*, Mahat, *Ahamkāra* and the subtle elements of *ākāśa*, air, fire, water and earth. Then, my friend, come the five organs of sensation, the ear, the skin, the eye, the nose and the tongue; the five organs of action, the mouth, the hands, the organs of generation and excretion, and the feet; and the mind, which partakes of the nature of both. Sound, the tactile element, flavour, smell and colour are the categories apprehended by the senses. Movement, speech, the acts of sex and of excretion, and manual skill are but the functions of the organs of action. When the time for the creation of the universe is at hand, *Prakṛti* is, in the form of evolving *tattvas* and evolutes, ripe for modification by the actions of the *guṇas*. While the unchanging *Purusha* looks on, Mahat and the other *tattvas*, undergoing change and

combining with each other, produce the cosmic egg, energized by the look of the *Purusha* and sustained by *Prakṛti* (14-19).

‘There is a school that holds that the *tattvas* are only seven in number, that is, the five subtle elements, *ākāśa* and the rest, the *jīva* (the seer), and the *Ātman*, the common support of both (the seer and the seen); from these seven originate the body, the organs and the vital airs. The view that the *tattvas* are six reckons only the five gross elements and the Supreme *Purusha* Who, uniting with them, His creatures, creates the universe of objects and enters into them. Yet another view is that the *tattvas* are only four, fire, water and earth, along with the *Ātman* and that by these the complex of effects (which constitutes the universe) is produced. The view that the *tattvas* are seventeen reckons the gross elements, the subtle elements, and the organs as five each, and also the mind and the *Ātman*. The reckoning of the *tattvas* as sixteen treats the mind as but the *Ātman* willing and desiring. The view that there are only thirteen *tattvas* numbers the elements and the organs as five each, and includes the mind, and the *Ātman* reckoned as two separate *tattvas*, the *jīvātmā* and the *Paramātmā*. The view that the *tattvas* are eleven takes into account only the *Ātman*, the gross elements, and the sense organs. The view that the *tattvas* are nine takes into account only the eight evolving *tattvas* and the *Purusha*. Thus the sages have reckoned the *tattvas* in many different ways; all of them plausible, being supported by reasoning. What proposition is there that the learned cannot defend? (20-25).

Uddhava raised another question. He said, ‘Though *Prakṛti* and the *Ātman* are by their nature different, the difference is not apparent, O Krishna, because they are mutually dependent; for the *Ātman* is found in the body, and likewise the body with the *Ātman*. This is the great doubt that troubles me, O Lotus-eyed. Thou, O Omniscient Lord, shouldst remove it with cogent arguments. For it is by Thy grace that the *jīvas* obtain knowledge, and it is by Thy power that it is taken away from them. Thou alone knowest the way Thy *Māyā* works; none else could.’ (26-28).

The Lord explained: Prakṛti and Puruṣa are totally different things, O best of men. The body and the like are mutable, being the product of the disturbance of equilibrium of the *guṇas*. My Power of Māyā, constituted of the *guṇas*, effects by their means differences in various ways, as well as notions of difference. The mutable world of effects is (broadly) of three kinds—the *adhyātma*, the *adhidaiva* and the *adhibhūta*. Thus the eye is the *adhyātma*, the colour it perceives is the *adhibhūta*, the fraction of the sun's power that is in the eye is the *adhidaiva*. These three are interdependent for producing their effects; whereas the orb of the sun in the sky shines by its own light. The *Ātman*, being the First Cause of all of them, is different from them. Being self-luminous, It lights up all others, though these have the power of revealing each other. That is true of each one of the other senses, too, touch, hearing, taste and smell, as well as of the internal organ. The ego, evolved from the Mahat, which itself emerged from the Pradhāna by the action of that which brought about the disequilibrium of the *guṇas*, is threefold in nature, *sāttvika*, *tāmāsa* and *rājāsa*. It is the parent of the notion of difference arising from delusion. All disputes between those who affirm, 'It¹ is', and those who maintain, 'It is not', is due to the ignorance of the Self. In fact, all disputes arise from the notion that difference is real. But though difference is unreal, it does not cease to exist for those whose minds are turned away from Me, their true Self (29-33).

Uddhava asked: 'How do men who are forgetful of Thee come, O Lord, to assume and discard bodies, high or low, as the result of their own *karmas*? Be pleased to explain, O Govinda, this thing, which men who have not realized the Self cannot know. There are few indeed in this world who know this, most men being taken in (by Māyā)' (34-35).

The Lord answered: The mind² of man, which is the product of past *karma*, goes with the five senses from body to body; the *Ātman*, though different from it, follows it. The mind, obeying its *karma* and dwelling

¹ 'It' here may refer to 'ahamkāra' or 'vikalpa'. ² See the notes on Bk. X. Ch. i.

on the objects that are presented to its attention as the fruits thereof, both those that are realized in this world and those that are spoken of by the Veda, becomes attached to them and estranged from those that had previously engaged its affections. Thereupon oblivion of the past follows. This intense forgetfulness of the old body, due to some cause or other, on the part of the *jīva*, following his intense pre-occupation with the new, is what is known as his 'death'; whereas the complete identification of the body with the Self on his part is spoken of, O lordly giver, as his 'birth'. The dream and the reverie supply an analogy here; the man who dreams, or is absorbed in reverie, forgets in the same manner past dreams and reveries, and though he is only his old self, thinks of himself as new-born. The threefold distinction¹ is an illusory appearance projected by the mind on the *Ātman*; which then begins to perceive differences both within and without (the body), even as the man who has begotten an evil son ceases to be impartial in his attitude towards other men (36-41).

Every second bodies are born and they die, my friend, as time moves on imperceptibly; but this is not noticed because it happens within so brief a space of time. As in the case of tongues of flame and flowing streams and the fruits of a tree, so in regard to bodies changes are effected by time in age, condition, etc. But even as we speak of a succession of sparks as light, and of a succession of drops of water as a stream, so men who have lived without learning discrimination think and speak (of a perpetually changing thing) as a man. But even that sort of man is neither born of the seed of his own *karma*, nor does he die by reason of any *karma*, any more than the fire that burns a log does, though error deludes him into thinking otherwise (42-45).

The body passes through nine states—entry into the womb, growth therein, birth, childhood, boyhood, youth, middle age, old age and death. Men falsely attribute to themselves, by reason of their ignorance of the fact that the body is not the soul, these changing

¹ The distinction between 'adhyātma', 'adhibhūta' and 'adhidaiva'.

states, high and low, which concern the body and are the product of the mind's longing; though some few somehow manage to discard the notion. The birth and death of one's own body may be inferred from what one sees happening to one's father and one's son. He who cognizes those things that are subject to birth and death cannot himself be liable to them. He who has seen the tree spring from the seed and die when its day is done, is different from the tree; even so is the witness in the body, from that body. The ignorant man, failing to distinguish the *Ātman* from *Prakṛti* in this way, becomes attached to objects of enjoyment and falls into the transmigratory life. Tossed from birth to birth by his own *karmas*, he is born among the sages or the gods by reason of *karmas* prompted by *sāttvic* impulses, among the Asuras or men, from those resulting from *rajas*, or among the spirits or the lower creation, by those dictated by *tamas*. Though the *jīva* is no doer, he, being witness of the antics of the mind, is compelled to identify himself with them, just as he who sees people singing or dancing imitates them in his own mind. Just as trees reflected in agitated water seem to be agitated¹, and to the whirling eye the earth seems to go round; just as the pleasures that one enjoys in reveries or in dreams are unreal, so, O Dāśārha, are the experiences of the sense-life of the *jīva*, which constitute *samsāra*. Though the world of the senses is unreal, the travail of *samsāra* is real for the *jīva* so long as the mind dwells longingly on the objects of enjoyment, even as the catastrophe that overtakes a man in a dream is real to him. Therefore, O Uddhava, do not give yourself up to enjoyments under the prompting of the phantom senses. You should realize that the illusion that sees the world of multiplicity is due to the ignorance of the Self. The man who aims at the supreme good should persevere in his efforts and uplift himself by using his intelligence, though evil folk might revile him and treat him with contempt, ridicule him, vent their spleen on him, beat him up, put him in confinement, deprive him of his livelihood, or ignorant fools defile him with turd and urine, and they

¹ S-(alt.) 'just as a man moving by water sees the trees on the bank moving.'

all seek in these and many other ways to turn him away from his purpose (46-58).

Uddhava prayed, 'Be pleased to expound these matters, O best of speakers, in such a way that the lesson will stick in the minds of me and everyone else who hears. I feel that the trespass of the wicked is too hard to bear even for the wise, unless they are firm in their devotion to Thy Dharma and have sought sanctuary at Thy feet, O Soul of the universe, and found peace. Human nature will not put up with it' (59-60).

CHAPTER XXIII

THE TALE OF THE MENDICANT

The son of Bādarāyaṇa said: Thus requested by Uddhava, foremost of the devotees of the Lord, Mukunda, first of the Dāśārhas, Whose power and glory it does one's heart good to hear spoken, honoured His follower for what he said, and answered him thus. The Lord said: There is no man on earth, however good, who can still the storm in his mind, O pupil of Brhaspati, caused by the vile words of the wicked. The man squarely hit in his vital parts by an arrow knows not such agony as he in whose heart the harsh words of bad men rankle. Bearing on this matter there is an old legend told, Uddhava, whose purifying power is great; listen with a collected mind, while I narrate it. It recalls what was said by a mendicant on whom the wicked had poured contumely, as he recollected with fortitude the natural issue of his own *karma*. In the Avanti region lived a Brahmana, who engaged in tilth and trade and amassed a huge fortune. But he was a miser, and besides lascivious, avaricious, and extremely irascible. Neither to kinsmen nor to chance guests did he extend even verbal courtesies. In that desolate¹ house, even his own body was denied its legitimate and seasonable satisfactions. The sons and relations of that wicked skinflint hated him. His desponding wives, daughters and servants made no effort to please him. Thus jealously guarding his hoarded wealth like the goblins,

¹ S. (alt.) 'house where neither virtue nor good works were ever seen.'

forfeiting both worlds, and securing neither Dharma nor the satisfaction of his own desires, he incurred the displeasure of the 'five co-sharers'¹. When by reason of his disregard of them, he lost part² of his accumulated merit, the wealth that he had got with such infinite pains slipped out of his hands. His kinsmen grabbed some of it, and thieves took more, O Uddhava, and the rest of the substance of this man, who was a disgrace to the Brahmana name, was dissipated by acts of God, the ravages of time, the depredations of men and the exactions of kings. When he thus lost his all, he who had neither done good to others nor enjoyed himself was totally neglected by his relations, and fell into a black melancholy (1-13).

As he brooded long in his misery, his wealth gone, his mind in a turmoil, his throat choking with tears, he was filled with a deep self-loathing. He mournfully reflected, 'Alas, miserable me ! this is what all my labour, piling up riches, has brought me to ; I have vexed my body to no purpose, gaining neither merit nor pleasure. The possessions of misers rarely bring them happiness ; only trouble and suffering for the body here, and hell after death. The least taint of covetousness destroys the good repute of famous men and the admirable qualities of men of virtue, even as a touch of leucoderma blots out an enviable beauty. Men are wearied with the labour of earning wealth and increasing it, haunted by fear in their efforts to safeguard it, consumed by care as they see it diminishing by use ; and they go out of their minds when it is lost. Theft, violence, lying, fraud, greed and anger, pride, arrogance, contention, rancour, distrust, jealousy and the 'three weaknesses'³—these are the fifteen evils that men trace to wealth. Therefore he who would gain the highest good should put a long distance between himself and this misfortune miscalled wealth. Brothers, spouses, parents and friends, who seemed in the intensity of their attachment to be life of his life, fall out in a trice over a farthing and

¹ The gods, *rshis*, manes, *bhūtas*, and men, propitiated by the *pancha-yajna*. ² Only that part which had been responsible for his prosperity; the rest apparently remained to his credit, since he was ultimately redeemed and saved (S.). ³ drink, dice and women.

become deadly foes. For trifles, they lose their self-possession and in blazing anger incontinently abandon him. In their jealousy, they cast aside all affection in a moment, and injure him (14-21).

‘Those who, having obtained birth as a human being, which the gods themselves might pray for, and that too among Brahmanas, value it so little that they neglect their eternal weal, go to perdition. Having secured a human body, which might be the gateway to heaven or to liberation, how could any mortal hanker after wealth, the home of all that is evil? The man who guards his hoarded wealth like the goblins, instead of sharing it with the gods, the sages, the manes, the spirits, his kinsmen, relations, and others entitled to a share, by using it for their benefit and his own, falls into the abyss. Having neglected all else in the vain pursuit of wealth, I find myself bereft of wealth, years and strength, which wise men use as means to fulfilment. An old man, what can I do now? How is it that even the man who fully realizes this, wears himself out in his incessant striving for wealth? Surely it is some one’s Māyā that thus fools the world. What possible use could man, who is in the jaws of death, have for wealth, or those who could bestow it, for pleasures, or again for those who could provide them, or for works that lead one on from birth to birth? (22-27).

‘Assuredly the exalted Lord Hari, Who is All-the-gods, is pleased with me, since He it is That has brought me to this pass and wrought in me this revulsion of feeling, which is the rescue-boat for the soul. Therefore, if I have still a little time left, I shall devote myself vigilantly to all means of securing the lasting good, and finding happiness in the Self, let the body wither away. May the gods who are the lords of the three worlds be propitious to me in this regard! Khatvāṅga gained Brahmaloka within the space of a *muhūrta*!’ (28-30).

The exalted Lord said: ‘Having thus resolved, that Brahmana from the Avanti country undid the knots of the heart and found peace; he renounced the world and became a contemplative and a wanderer on the earth, with his mind, senses and vital airs well under control.

Having shed all attachments, he entered cities and villages to beg food, hiding his true worth from the eyes of men. When they saw him, a mendicant stricken in years, his body covered with dirt, evil men insulted him, my friend, by heaping indignities on him. Some snatched away the triple staff from his hands, others his alms bowl, water gourd, wooden seat, and string of beads, his rags and his tree-bark. Making as if they would give them back to the sage, and dangling them before his eyes, they would whisk them off again. As he was eating on the river bank the food he had begged, the scum of the earth would piss on it and spit on his head. When he remained silent, they forced him to speak, and if he did not, beat him. Others would threaten him, crying 'Thief!'. Some would tie him up with cords, shouting, 'Bind him, tie him up!' Others scornfully traduced him, saying, 'He is a pretender to holiness, and a cheat. Having lost his all and been abandoned by his own people, he has taken to this profession.' 'Ah! the fellow is stupendous in his strength, and immovable as a mountain. Resolute in his purpose, he gains his end by silence, like the stork': thus others, mocking him. Some would break wind at him, others put him in bonds and kept him confined, like a caged pet bird (31-40).

When it thus fell out, he saw the hand of Providence in every affliction as it came, whether caused by the world, by the gods, or by his own body, and knew he must submit to it. Though thus disgraced by the dregs of humanity, who would have dislodged him from Dharma, he stuck to his Dharma, fortified by the firmness that comes from self-control, and he gave vent to his thoughts in these words. The Brahmana said: 'These men cannot be the cause of my happiness or misery; neither can the gods, my own soul, the planets, my former *karmas*, nor time. It is the mind, which keeps the cycle of birth and death revolving, that is accounted as the sole cause of happiness and misery. The mind, which is very powerful, induces the activity of the *guṇas*, which gives rise to different kinds of *karma*, *sāttvic*, *tāmasic* and *rājasic*. And these lead to congruous births. Though the Paramātmān is associated with the mind

that longs and strives, He¹, being essentially of the nature of knowledge, and the Companion (Inner Ruler) of the *jīva*, merely looks on with clear-eyed detachment at the activity of the mind. But the *jīva*, identifying himself with the mind, gives himself up to enjoyment, attracted by the objects of the senses, and falls into bondage. The giving of gifts, the practice of one's own *dharma*, the disciplines of self-control, external and internal, the learning of the Veda in the prescribed manner, the observance of purifying vows and the performance of rites, are all means of attaining control of the mind. And the subjugation of the mind is indeed the highest yoga. If a man's mind has been stilled by concentration, what has he to gain, tell me, by the giving of gifts, and so on? If, on the contrary, his mind remains uncontrolled or becomes torpid², what use could these be to him? The gods that direct the various faculties are controlled by the mind, but the mind is not controlled by aught else. Terrible is that god³, who is stronger than the strongest. He who can dominate him obtains mastery over the senses. They are fools who, failing to subdue this all but invincible foe, who attacks with irresistible force and striking at the vitals causes agony, pick up unrighteous quarrels with other men and come to look upon some as friends, others as enemies, and yet others as neutrals. The unenlightened men who think of the body, which is the creature of the mind, as 'me', and of their kith and kin as 'mine', and make unreal distinctions, 'I am so and so, he is something else,' wander in the endless maze of *samsāra* (41-50).

'Supposing that men are responsible for each other's joy or sorrow, what does it matter to the *jīva*? Surely, it is the affair of the material bodies. If a man sometimes bites his own tongue, which of them (the teeth or the tongue) shall he blame for the pain? If the activities of the gods are to be regarded as the cause of a man's sorrows, how is the *jīva* concerned? If one of his own limbs strikes another, which of them shall he censure? If the *jīva* should be regarded as the author

¹ 'Hiraṇmaya' is explained as 'vidyā-śakti-pradhānah', and *mat-sakhā* as 'my (i.e. the *jīva*'s) friend'. ² (*alt.*) 'becomes distracted'. ³ the mind.

of his own joys and sorrows, how would any one else be responsible for what is apparently his native disposition? And there is in reality nought else but the *Ātman*; if there should seem to be, it cannot be real. Nor have happiness and unhappiness any reality either. Then why be angry? If the planets are to be deemed the cause of happiness and misery, how does that concern the *Ātman*, who knows no birth, though indeed they may affect the creaturely body? Planets are said to afflict each other, but with whom shall the *jīva*, who is other than they, quarrel? Even if it were true that *karma* was the cause of happiness and misery, how would that concern the *Ātman*? *Karma* would be possible only for that which was at once both matter and spirit. But, whereas the body is material, the *jīva* is of the nature of pure consciousness. When thus the existence of *karma* itself, the alleged cause, is negated, whom shall we blame? If it be maintained that time is the cause of joy and sorrow, how could that affect the *jīva*? For the *Ātman* is of the nature of time; and fire does not destroy fire, neither does snow snow. The pairs of opposites do not exist for the One Reality. With whom, then, does one quarrel? The *Ātman*, which is beyond Prakṛti, is not affected in the least by the pairs of opposites, anywhere or from any cause, as the ego is, which foists on it the illusory cycle of birth and death. He who has woken up to this truth goes no longer in fear of any creature. Therefore I shall establish myself in permanent awareness of the supreme *Ātman*, as did the great sages of yore, by wholehearted devotion to Mukunda's feet, and cross the endless sea of *samsāra*. (51-58).

The Lord thus summed up: So said the sage who, having lost his wealth and become disillusioned, had shed his debilitating sorrows and renounced, and had gone forth as a wanderer on the face of the earth, and could not be shaken from allegiance to his own Dharma by the jeers and flouts of the wicked. The *samsāric* life, which makes a man think in terms of friend and foe and neutral, is pure delusion of the mind caused by nescience; and that is responsible for happiness and misery, nothing else. Therefore, my son, still the

mind with all the force of your will entrenched in Me. This is the sum and substance of yoga. He who meditates with a steady mind on these words of the mendicant, which describe the state of enduring Brāhmīc consciousness, or hears them uttered by another, or induces others to hear them, will never be overwhelmed by the pairs of opposites (59-62).

CHAPTER XXIV SĀNKHYA AND YOGA

The Lord went on with His teaching. He said: I shall now expound to you the principles of the Sāṅkhya as they have been determined by teachers in the past; the man who possesses that knowledge will shed the error due to the sense of difference. Consciousness and the entire world of objects were one and undifferentiated before creation started, as well as in the Kṛta-yuga, which commenced with creation; and they remain thus at all times for men of discriminating wisdom. The Brahma, pure and undifferentiated, then appeared as two by the manifestation of Its Māyā in a manner that baffles speech and thought. Of the two entities one was Prakṛti, which manifests itself in two ways; the other was consciousness, spoken of as Puruṣa. *Tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva* were the qualities that were manifested by Prakṛti, when I disturbed her state of equilibrium, fulfilling the urge of the Puruṣa. From them issued the Sūtram¹, and Mahat as one with it. It evolved into the ego, the cause of delusion for the *jīva*. The ego is of three kinds—Vaikārika (Sāttvika), Taijasa (Rājasa), and Tāmasa. Qualifying *chit*, and partaking of the nature of *achit*, it evolved into the subtle elements, the organs (of sense and action) and the mind. The gross elements were evolved from the Tāmasa Ahamkāra, through the subtle elements; the organs were evolved from Taijasa Ahamkāra, and the eleven gods including the mind were evolved from the Vaikārika Ahamkāra. Prompted by Me, all the *tattvas*, acting in combination, produced

¹ S. explains that *Sūtra*, endowed with *kriya-śakti*, was the first evolute; then emerged its *jñāna-śakti*. What is only one *tattva* is spoken of as two, because of its two qualities.

the cosmic egg, My splendid tabernacle¹. In that egg, which lay on the waters, I manifested Myself. From My navel sprang the lotus called the universe, and the Self-create² appeared in it. Obtaining My grace by the practice of austerities, He, the soul of the universe, created, by employing *rajas*, the worlds that fall into three divisions, known as Bhūh, Bhuvah, and Suvah, as well as their Guardians. *Svarga* was the abode of the gods ; in the upper air lived the spirits ; men and other mortal creatures peopled the earth. The Siddhas sojourned above these three worlds. The Lord allotted the worlds below the earth to the Asuras and the Nāgas (serpents) for their dwelling-place. Sojourn in any of the three worlds is the result of the *karmas* which are the product of the three *guṇas*. The Mahah, Janah, Tapah and Satya Lokas are the pure abodes which are won by Yoga, austerities or *sannyāsa* ; while Bhakti-yoga leads to My world (Vaikuntha) (1-14).

All the world of beings devoted to works repeatedly raises its head above the eternal flux caused by the *guṇas* and plunges into it again, thanks to Me, the Supreme Lord, armed with the power of time. Whatever exists, big or small, lean or fat, has both Prakṛti and Purusha in it. That from which anything emerges and into which it merges again is, clearly, what it is in the interim also, and That alone is real. All modifications have only a practical value ; such, for example, as the things fashioned from gold or earth. That entity is real³ which, as material cause, produces an effect. When one entity is spoken of as that from which another derives and into which it merges again, the former is described as real. Prakṛti, as is well known, is the material cause of the world of effects. The Supreme Lord is her Ruler and Controller⁴. Time is the cause of the manifestation of the universe. That triad is but Me, the Brahma (15-19).

¹ that is, of the Inner Ruler of the Vairāja, the soul of the cosmos. ² He is but the Vairāja reincarnate as the auspicious, four-faced Brahmā. ³ While so far as the effect is concerned, the cause is described as 'real', it would be unreal in the context of *its* cause ; and so on, till the First Cause, the Paramātmā is reached ; He is the Only Real. ⁴ This is S.'s rendering of Ādhāra ('support').

Creation in its infinite variety proceeds uninterruptedly from prior to posterior, for the sake of the *jīva*, till its end is reached when so the Lord wills. Attacked¹ by Me, the cosmic egg, which causes the daily creation and destruction of the worlds within itself in multifarious ways, is brought, along with the worlds it contains, to the state of dissolution into its five constituent elements. The body perishes for lack of food, since no food-grain is left except what is required for seed ; the seed is lost in the earth, and the earth turns into odour; odour is absorbed by the waters ; the waters are reduced to the subtle element of flavour, which is consumed by fire. Fire, overwhelmed by air, is reduced to the subtle element of colour and is absorbed by air. And air, mastered by *ākāśa*, is reduced to the subtle element of touch, which gets absorbed in *ākāśa*. *Ākāśa* is absorbed in the subtle element of sound. The senses are absorbed in those (the gods) that activate them. They are merged in the mind, their controller, my friend ; which, along with the gods, is absorbed in the *Vaikārika-ahamkāra*. The subtle element of sound is absorbed in *Tāmasa-ahamkāra*. And *Ahamkāra*, which prevails over everything else, gets absorbed in Mahat. The Mahat, possessed of the highest qualities, gets absorbed in the three *guṇas*, which had produced it. They revert to their state (of equilibrium) in Prakṛti. Prakṛti becomes one with time in its dormant state. Time merges in the Mahā-puruṣa, who sets Māyā at work, and He in Me, the Ātman That knows no birth. The Ātman, Which is free from all limiting adjuncts and is the ground of creation and destruction, is established in Itself. How can error, born of the sense of difference, assail the mind of the man who reasons out the matter in this fashion, or find lodgment in it, any more than darkness in the sky when the sun rises ? I, who comprehend all things, high and low, have now described for your benefit the mode of operation of the Sāṅkhya principles in both the normal and the reverse orders ; this teaching should sunder the knot of doubt (20-29).

¹ *āsādyā*, means 'attacked', but S. interprets it as 'pervaded'.

CHAPTER XXV

THE WORKING OF THE GUNAS

The Lord went on : And now, O best of men, listen carefully while I tell you how each of the three *gunas* may, in their uncombined state, affect a man's disposition. Control of the mind and the senses, patience, discrimination, self-discipline, truthfulness, compassion, recollectedness, contentment, freehandedness, non-attachment to the life of the senses, faith, aversion, from a sense of shame, to wrong-doing, charity, and delighted absorption in the Self ; desire, restless activity, pride, greed, haughtiness, propitiation of gods for material success, consciousness of difference, sensuality, lust for fighting, love of flattery, ridicule of others, ostentatious display of might, and aggression from consciousness of strength ; intolerance, miserliness, dishonesty, perfidy, cringing for benefits, hypocrisy, languor, strife, sorrow, confusion of mind, despondency and misery, lassitude, idle expectation, timorousness and apathy—this is a practically exhaustive enumeration in due order of the operations of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* respectively. And now you shall hear what happens when they exist in combination. All states of mind into which the feeling of ' me ' and ' mine ' enters are the result of combinations of the three qualities. And all activity involving the mind, the subtle elements, the senses and the vital airs is the result of such combinations, Uddhava. When a man is resolute in the pursuit of Dharma, Artha and Kāma, this intense concentration is itself the result of the combination of the three *gunas* ; and it is productive of faith, enjoyment and wealth. A man's addiction to the *dharma*s prompted by desire, his attachment to the life of the householder, and his devotion, later, to the *dharma*s that devolve on him by virtue of his station in life—what is all this but the result of the combined action of the three *gunas* ? (1-8).

From a man's ability to control the mind, and other similar qualities, one may infer that he is of a *sāttvic* disposition ; from his entertaining desires, and so on, that he is wedded to *rajas* ; and from his exhibition of anger, etc., that he is bound up with *tamas*. When a

person worships Me with devotion by performing his allotted duties and asks for nothing, you may be sure that that person, be it a man or a woman, is of a *sāttvic* nature. But if one seeks to propitiate Me by the performance of *karmas* prompted by desire in his heart, you should know that he is *rājasic*; when he does so from the desire to injure another, that he is *tāmasic*. The *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, belong to the *jīva*, not to Me by any means, since they manifest themselves in the mind, and he is bound by them, because he is attached to the material world. When *sattva*, luminous, pellucid and serene, prevails over the other two in a man, he will be virtuous and enlightened. When *rajas*, which leads to attachment, implants the sense of difference and promotes activity, overcomes *tamas* and *sattva* in a man, he is keen on fame and prosperity, and throws himself into activity, and he will experience grief. When *tamas*, which robs one of discrimination, clouds the intellect and induces apathy, predominates over *sattva* and *rajas* in a man, he will succumb to sorrow and delusion and inflict suffering on others; he will subside into torpor, and dream away his life. When the mind is serene and the senses are at rest, when the body sheds fear and the heart is free from attachment, know that that is the state of *sattva* in which one attains Me. When a man is ever up and doing and is distracted by many things, when his senses know no rest, his limbs engage feverishly in activity and his mind is in a perpetual flutter of excitement, you may know by these tokens that he is in the grip of *rajas*. When the clouded intelligence fails in grasp and sinks down, when the man is unable to make up his mind and shows nothing but weariness and ignorance, be sure that *tamas* prevails. With the *sattva* *guṇa* dominant, the gods wax strong; with *rajas*, the *Āsuras*; with *tamas*, O Uddhava, the *Rākshasas*. The state of wakefulness indicates the dominance of *sattva*; of dream, that of *rajas*; and of sleep, that of *tamas*. The 'Fourth' is continually present in all these three states (9-20).

Those who have faithfully discharged the duties ordained by the Veda go up higher and higher to the worlds of bliss by their power of *sattva*. *Tamas* hurls

men down to lower and lower depths, even into the world of inanimate objects. By *rajas*, they become sojourners on earth. Those who die when *sattva* is dominant in them go to the world of the gods; those who die when *rajas* is, are reborn as men; those who die when *tamas* is, go to hell. Those who are free from the sway of the *guṇas* attain Me. One's ordained *karma* is *sāttvic*, when it is performed with the intention to propitiate Me, or inspired by no desire for the fruits thereof. The *karma* that is done with an eye to the fruits is *rājasic*. That *karma* which inflicts considerable suffering on others is *tāmasic*. Knowledge of the *jīva* (as something different from the body) is *sāttvic* knowledge. The knowledge that does not differentiate the Self from the body is *rājasic*. The knowledge of the ignorant multitude is *tāmasic*. That knowledge by which men know Me in truth is beyond the sway of the *guṇas*. The forest as a place of residence is *sāttvic*, the village *rājasic*, the gambling hall *tāmasic*; my temple is beyond the *guṇas*. The doer of *karma* who is unattached to what he does is *sāttvic*, he that is blinded by desire is *rājasic*; he that acts unreflectingly is *tāmasic*; he that puts his trust solely in Me is untouched by the *guṇas*. Faith in the teaching of the Veda regarding the Self is *sāttvic*; faith in *karma* is *rājasic*; persistence in regarding *adharma* as *dharma* is *tāmasic*; to be zealous in My service is to be free from the sway of the *guṇas*. The food that is wholesome, pure and obtained without trouble is considered *sāttvic*; what the palate finds delectable is *rājasic*; what makes one sick or is impure is *tāmasic*. The happiness that comes from knowledge of the Self is *sāttvic*; that which is owed to objects of enjoyment is *rājasic*; that which one finds in delusion and self-abasement is *tāmasic*; that happiness which comes from realization of Me is untouched by the *guṇas*. Thus substance, domicile, fruits of *karma*, time, knowledge, action, agent, faith, the condition¹ of the body, the progress in the spiritual life, and the destiny to which one is bound, are all the products of the three *guṇas*. In fact, everything that exists by reason of Puruṣa and Prakṛti being present in it, is

¹ The state of wakefulness, dream or sleep.

made up of the three *guṇas*, O best of men, whether it be what one sees, or hears of, or dwells upon in one's mind (21-31).

These are the experiences that befall a man as the result of the three *guṇas* and the *karmas* they lead to. The *jīva*, who has overcome these *guṇas*, which arise in the *chitta*, establishes himself securely in Me by his devotion and becomes fit for liberation. Therefore men of discrimination, who have at their disposal a body which can be the vehicle of knowledge and illumination, should devote themselves to My worship, discarding attachment to the products of the three *guṇas*. Freeing himself from all attachments and remaining vigilant, the wise man who has subdued his senses should worship Me. The yogi should conquer *rajas* and *tamas* by using only what is *sāttvic*. Tranquil at heart, he should then quench *sattva* too by cultivating that aspect of it which leads to extinction of the mind. Freed from the *guṇas*, the *jīva* rids himself of the subtle body and reaches Me. The *jīva*, when freed from the subtle body and from the *guṇas* which arise in the *chitta*, is filled with Me, the Brahma; and he ceases from all activity, internal or external (32-36).

CHAPTER XXVI

THE LAMENT OF AILA

The Lord continued His teaching. He said: He who, having obtained a body in which he can realize Me, is steady in his devotion to Me, will of a certainty attain Me, the Ātman, Whose nature is Supreme Bliss, since I am present in his Self. Freed from the limiting adjuncts of the *jīva*, made up of the three *guṇas*, by reason of being secure in his enlightenment, he will form no attachment to the unreal world of objects, though he lives amidst them, since he realizes that they, being of the stuff of *Māyā*, are unreal. One should never associate with the evil men who pamper the appetite and the carnal urge. He who follows such a man will stumble into the black abyss, like the blind following the blind. That

emperor of great renown, Ilā's son¹, uttered the following words, when he, who had been out of his mind because of separation from Urvaśī, had no longer cause for grief, but had undergone a revulsion of feeling. When she was going away abandoning him, the king had followed her like a madman, naked and wailing, his mind in a turmoil, 'Ah, my wife ! stop, cruel one'. His heart ravished by Urvaśī, his appetite unsated by continual indulgence in trivial pleasures, he was not aware of the coming or the passing of the nights, as the years rolled on (1-6).

The son of Ilā said, 'Alas for me, that I should have succumbed to this folly so long, my mind foul with lust, oblivious of my life slipping away while the goddess had her arm round my neck. Taken in by this woman, I did not know whether the sun had risen or set. I was not aware of the passing of the days, countless though the years, alas ! How amazing, that self-delusion which could make me, emperor and crest-jewel among men, submit my body to be the pet deer of women ! Naked, and wailing like one mad, I followed the woman, who went away discarding me, the lord of my people, and all my possessions, as if we were of no more account than a straw. What happened to my dignity, strength and sovereign power, when I ran after the departing woman, as the jackass does even when it is kicked ? What use is learning or austerities, *sannyāsa* or the study of the Vedas, the solitary life or restraint in speech, to one whose mind has succumbed to woman ? Fie on me for a fool, not knowing my own good, but imagining myself wise, truckling under to women like a cow or an ass, after having achieved empire ! Having been drinking the heady wine of Urvaśī's lips for endless years, the passion kindled in the heart is no more slaked by it than fire is by oblations. Who but the exalted Lord Adhokshaja Himself, Master of those that delight in the Self, can set free the heart that a harlot has captured ? Though the goddess did her best to enlighten me with her true words, I, silly fool, am unable to expel the infatuation

¹ Purūravas. The story follows the account in the Ninth Book (which departs from the versions in the Rg. Veda and the *Śata-patha-Bṛāhmaṇa*, where no mention is made of Purūravas's repentance.)

that possesses my mind, since I have not won self-control. How did she wrong me, who, having failed to subdue the senses, find myself in this pass, any more than the rope wrongs the man who imagines that it is a snake, not knowing that it is a rope ? (7-17).

‘What can there be in common between this foul body, smelly and unclean, and such qualities as a happy and gladsome state of mind ? They are superimposed on it by nescience. To that body of which one cannot be sure whether it belongs to the parents, to the wife, to the master, to fire, to the dog or the vulture, to one’s own self or to one’s friends ; to that cadaver, impure and destined to an ignoble end, one clings, crying “ Ah ! how lovely is the face of woman, with its shapely nose and charming smile ! ” What is the difference between those who delight in this mass of skin, flesh, blood, guts, fat, viscera and bone, and the worms that delight in excreta, urine and pus ? Still, the man of sense should be careful not to allow himself to be attracted by women or by the men who run after them. It is by the contact of the senses with the objects of enjoyment that the mind gets disturbed, and in no other way. The mind is not disturbed by objects that one has not seen or heard of. When a man controls the senses, his mind is stilled, and is at peace. Therefore one should not allow oneself to be drawn through the senses to women and to men who are women-addicts. Even the wise must not put their trust in the group of six; how much less people like me’ (18-24).

The Lord commented : Thus proclaiming his faith, he who shone bright among the kings and the gods, left the world of Urvaśi, and realizing Me, the Paramātmā, within himself, ceased from the travail of *samsāra*, all delusion dispelled by enlightenment. Therefore the intelligent man should give up bad company and cultivate the friendship of the good. The men of saintly character will dispel his infatuation by their sage counsel. They are saints who ask for nothing, their minds being wholly given to Me ; who have found peace and look on all with an equal eye ; who are devoid of selfishness and egotism, indifferent to the pairs of opposites, and vowed to non-possession. Where such great souls

forgather, O fortunate one, there are always heard discourses on My glorious deeds, which are good for those that hear them ; they dispel the sins of those who delight in them. Those who hear these tales or themselves recite them, or applaud them with fervour, become My faithful adherents and put their trust in Me and learn to love Me. What could the good man want, who has love for Me, the Brahma of infinite auspicious attributes, Whose essence is the blissful experience of the Self ? Just as the man who gets close to the fire is freed from the cold, the darkness and the fear thereof, so likewise is the man who devotes himself to the service of the saintly. For those who are tossed up and down in the dread sea of *samsāra*, the saintly folk who have realized the Brahma and found peace are a sure refuge, as is the sturdy boat for those who are drowning. Food is the sustainer of life. I am the Succour of the stricken. Dharma is the wealth that men garner for the other world. Likewise, good men are the refuge of him who fears a headlong fall into *samsāra*. The good give us eyes ; the sun, riding in the sky, shows us but the world without. The good are the gods, they are own kin to us ; they are our very Self, why, they are Me too. The son of Vēetasena, having thus shed the desire to bask in the sight of Urvaśī, and freed himself from all attachments, roamed the earth, finding all delight in the Self (25-35).

CHAPTER XXVII

KRIYĀ-YOGA

Uddhava prayed, ' Describe for my benefit, O Lord, Kriyā-yoga, the mode of worshipping Thee. I should like to hear, O foremost of the Sātvatas, how Thy various devotees worship Thee, wherein and wherewith¹. Nārada, the blessed Vyāsa, and the Āchārya (Brhāspati), the son of Angiras, have praised, as being conducive to the highest good when practised regularly, this mode of worshipping Thee, which was given out by Thee, and taught by the Lord Aja to his sons Bhṛgu and others, and by the great God Bhava to the Goddess. This is assuredly acceptable to all *varṇas* and *āśramas*, O

¹ 'In what tabernacle, and with what materials of worship'.

Lord That exaltest Thy own, and it should confer the highest benefits on them as well as on women and Sūdras. Impart to me, Thy loving devotee, O Lord of the lotus eyes, paramount over the lords of creation, knowledge of this worship whereby one may free oneself from the bonds of *karma*' (1-5).

The Lord said: The modes of worship are numberless and inexhaustible, Uddhava, but I can give you a brief factual and orderly account of the subject. My worship is of three kinds—according to the Veda, according to the Tantra and according to a mode that combines both. A man may worship Me according to whichever of these modes appeals to him. Listen while I explain how a man, having been admitted to the sacrament of the twice-born at the proper time, under the Veda to which he owes allegiance, should worship Me with zeal and faith. He shall lovingly worship Me, his own Guru, in all sincerity, and with appropriate offerings, in an image, in symbolic diagrams drawn on the ground, in the fire, in the sun, in water, in his own heart, or in the person of a Brahmana. Cleaning his teeth, he shall cleanse the body by bathing, and then, using mud and other such things, bathe again, uttering both kinds of *mantras*. Performing all the rites prescribed by the Veda, including the *sandhyā*, he shall, with the intention of propitiating the All-highest, offer Me the worship that will free him from *karma* (6-11).

Eight kinds of images are recognised—those made of stone, wood or metal, or modelled from plastic materials, pictures, or images formed of sand, or conjured up in the heart, or made of precious stones. The image into which the Lord is invoked is of two kinds—movable or fixed. Where it is a fixed one, O Uddhava, there would be no question of invoking the presence of the Lord into it at the time of worship and vacating it afterwards. In regard to movable images various procedures will be necessary. Where the Lord is worshipped in a diagram drawn on the ground, both invocation and revocation would have to be made. Images other than pictures or those modelled from plastic materials should be bathed; the others should be wiped clean by hand. In worshipping Me in images, and so on, the best materials should

be employed. But My sincere devotee¹ may use such as he can get ; if he should worship Me in his heart,² let him make Me offerings of the mind's conjuring. Bathing and decorating are preferred only in the case of images, Uddhava. Where a symbolic diagram drawn on the ground is worshipped, the different deities, principal and ancillary, should be invoked in their appropriate places in it ; if it is fire that is worshipped, oblations soused in ghee should be made in it ; if it is the sun, worship should take the form of prayer and praise ; if it is water, the worship should be in the form of offering water libations, and so on. Even water, if offered by My devotee with faith, is precious to Me ; how much more, then, should sumptuous worship with scents, flowers, lights, food and cake be ? But even an abundance of these things will not be acceptable to Me if offered by one who has no love for Me (12-18).

Purifying himself and setting out all the materials of worship in readiness, he should sit on *kuśa* grass, facing east or north and always facing the image, and do the worship. Commending the various parts of his body to the protection of the guardian deities, by doing *nyāsa*, he should do the same to the image with the syllables of the *mūla-mantra* and then gently wipe clean My image. He should then consecrate (with flowers, sandal paste etc.) the water-pot and the vessel which holds the water for sprinkling. Sprinkling the place of worship, the materials used and himself with the lustral water, and filling three vessels with that water, he should put into each one of them the appropriate materials. And over these three vessels, holding water, for *pādya*, *arghya* and *āchamana*, the worshipper should utter the *mantras* relating to the heart, the head, and the hair on the head respectively, as well as the *Gāyatrī*. In his own body, purified by the *Vāyu* and the *Agni* within, the worshipper should contemplate on My highest form,³ atomic in size, located in the heart-lotus, which the perfected meditate upon as being beyond the 'Nāda'. When his body

¹ 'who entertains no desires' (S.). ² S. (alt.) Where not even ordinary offerings like flowers or sandal paste are available, the worshipper might be content with imagining himself as making offerings. ³ The text has *jīva-kalā*.—See Notes.

is irradiated by That Presence with which he identifies himself in thought, he should worship It with all honours mentally offered, and then, filled with Its afflatus, invoke It in the image or other vehicle of worship, and establish It there. Then he should prepare My seat there with Dharma and the rest and the nine *Saktis*, and with the eight-petalled lotus thereon, resplendent with pericarp and filaments, and offer Me the honours of *pādya*, *āchamana* and *arghya*, according to both sets of rules, for the realization of the fruits thereof, both here and hereafter. He should then offer worship to the Sudarśana, the Pāñchajanya, the mace, the sword, the bow and arrows, the plough and pestle, and also to the Kausthubha, the garland (Vaijayanti) and the Sri-vatsa. He should worship, with sprinkling and so on, Nanda, Sunanda, Garuda, Prachanda, Chanda, Mahā-bala, Bala, Kumuda and Kumudekshana, as well as Durgā, Vināyaka, Vyāsa, and Vishvaksena, and his Gurus and the gods, all of them (conceived of as) facing the Lord (19-29).

He should bathe the image every day, if his means permit, in water scented with sandal, *uśīra*, camphor, saffron and aloes, chanting the appropriate *mantra* such as the *anuvāka* that begins with the words 'Suvarnam-gharmam', the *mantra*¹ relating to the Mahāpurusha Vidyā, the *Purushasūkta* and the Sāmans, 'Rajana' and the like. He who is My devotee should decorate Me fittingly with love in his heart, clothing Me, investing Me with the sacred thread and ornaments, drawing decorative patterns on the face and the body with fragrant substances, and offering Me garlands, scents and unguents. The worshipper should devoutly offer water for washing the feet and for *āchamana*, scents, flowers, unbroken rice, incense, lights and food. If he can afford it, he should offer milk-broth with jaggery and ghee, sugared rice cakes cooked in oil, flour-cakes, and *modaka*, barley preparations, curds and sauces. Bathing the image after the ceremonial cleaning of the teeth, oiling and ceremonial massaging or anointing with 'panchāmṛta', holding the mirror to the face, offering food and dainties, and entertainment with song and dance, should

¹ The *mantra* 'Jitam-te-Pundarikāksha'.

be features of the daily worship, if he can manage it, or should be done at least on special days such as the *Parvas* (30-35).

In the fire-place built according to the rules, with zones, fire-pocket and altar, he should kindle the fire, and shield it with the hand so that it may burn as a single tongue of flame. Laying *darbha* grasses all round it, he should sprinkle water on them; and then, doing the *anvādhāna* rite as prescribed, he should place on the northern side the materials to be used in the *homa*, and sprinkle them with water from the lustral vessel. Having done this, he should meditate on Me as present in the fire, bright as burnished gold, with four arms, adorned with the conch-shell, the discus, the mace and the lotus which they carry; serene and peaceful; clad in raiment soft as lotus-filaments; wearing a glittering crown, bracelets, and girdle and splendid armlets; with the Srīvatsa mark on the breast, the dazzling Kausthubha jewel, and the garland of wild flowers. Meditating thus on Me, the wise man should worship Me; then placing in the fire dry twigs on which ghee has been poured, he should make the oblations connected with the 'āghāras' and the 'ājyabhāgas' and offer oblations drenched with ghee, accompanied by the incantation of the *moola-mantra* and the Purusha-Sūkta, with the sixteen *ṛks*, the chanting of each *ṛk*. being followed by an oblation. He should worship Dharma and others in due order, chanting the *mantras* relating to them as he offers oblations, and should also propitiate the god of fire with the 'svishṭa-kṛtam' offering. Having thus worshipped the Lord in the fire and made his prostrations to Him, he should offer oblations to His attendants. Then he should perform the *japa* of the *moola-mantra*, meditating on the Brahma in the form of Narayana. Giving the Lord water for *āchamana*, he should make an offering of the remnants of the consecrated food to Vishvaksena. Then he should give Me *pān* and other fragrant substances for chewing, and worship Me again¹. Singing My glories, extolling Me, dancing and miming My exploits, reciting the tale of My doings and hearing them told by others, he should spend a leisurely hour

¹ With flowers (S.).

in a serene frame of mind. Chanting in My praise the hymns of the ancients and the panegyrics of latter-day singers, he should throw himself down on the ground like a stick, making his prostrations to Me with the words 'Be pleased, O Lord, to shower Thy grace on Me'. Touching My feet with his head, and laying his crossed hands on My feet, he should implore, 'Save me, All-powerful Lord, save me who take refuge in Thee, terrified of the ocean swarming with the crocodiles of death'. Uttering this prayer, and placing with loving joy on his head the flowers used in My worship, which I give him, he should restore the object of worship to its receptacle, if it may be moved, and reunite the light of *chaitanya* invoked in the image with the flame in the lotus of the heart (36-47).

A man may worship Me in any object, image or other, in which he feels the urge to worship Me at that time. I, the Soul of all, am ever present in all creatures and in his own Self. Thus, worshipping Me according to any of the modes of worship laid down in the Vedas and the Tantras, he will obtain from Me all that he desires here and hereafter. He may install My image in a place of worship solidly built and endow pleasant flower gardens. The man who donates land, shops, townships and villages for the maintenance of the daily worship, the conducting of periodical pilgrim fairs, and the celebrations of the great festivals regularly and without a break, will gain power and authority equal to Mine. He will obtain an empire by installing My image, the sovereignty of the three worlds by building a temple, a place in the world of Brahmā by making permanent provision for worship, and so on ; while by doing all these things he will become My equal. The man who has for Me the unswerving devotion that asks for no return attains Me ; such devotion comes to him who worships Me in the way I have described. He who takes away from the gods or the Brahmanas the means of their maintenance, whether it had been granted by him or by others, will be born as a worm and feed on dung for endless years. The same punishment awaits the accomplice, the instigator and the approver of such a deed, when they come to die, since all of them are participators in the crime ; the greater the guilt the greater the punishment (48-55).

CHAPTER XXVIII THE SUPREME GOAL

The Lord went on : Let no man praise or blame another for what he is or does ; he should realize that the universe, along with Prakṛti and Puruṣa, is of the nature of the one Ātman. He who indulges in praise or blame of another's disposition or works swerves from his goal by reason of this obsession with the unreal. When the senses are overcome by drowsiness, the *jīva* within falls into the delusion of dream, or if the mind is swamped, plunges into death-like sleep. Similar is the fate of the man who is distracted by the world of multiplicity. When all duality is unreal, which of it shall we call good and which evil, or how much of it ? What the tongue utters¹ is untrue, and so is what the mind dwells upon. But even as a reflection, an echo or an illusion, though unreal, may have consequences, so the body and other objects can be a life long cause of fear². It is the Ātman Itself, with Its infinite potentialities, That creates the universe and as its soul sustains it, and being possessed of all powers, destroys it ; and It is Itself created as the universe, protected and destroyed. Therefore nothing can be shown to exist which is other than the Ātman, Which is Itself in truth different (from the world of created things). The manifest threefold creation is unreal, being a mere appearance projected on the Ātman. It is of the stuff of the *guṇas* and is manifested by *Māyā* in these three forms. The man who has achieved the perfection of knowledge and illumination, which I have taught, neither praises nor blames, but conducts himself in the world like the sun. Knowing by perception, inference, the authority of the Veda and first-hand experience that all that has a beginning and an end is unreal, he should live in the world free from all attachments (I-9).

Uddhava asked : ' Neither for the *Ātman*, the subject, Which is self-luminous, nor for the body, the object, which is material, should experience of *samsāra* be

¹ This is merely illustrative, the entire objective world apprehended by the senses being unreal. ² S. (*alt.*) ' can be the cause of fear, till they disappear on the dawn of enlightenment'.

possible. The *Ātman* is immutable, unqualified, pure, self-luminous and limitless ; it is like the fire in the log of wood. Like that log, the body is material. How could either of them be subject to the transmigratory experience in this world ?' (10-11).

The Lord answered : So long as the connection of the *Ātman* with the body, the senses, and the vital airs remains, as it does for the man who lacks discrimination, *samsāra*, though in fact unreal, will be a reality for him. Though the objective world is unreal, experience of *samsāra* does not cease for the *jīva* so long as his mind dwells longingly on the objects of enjoyment, just as the sense of catastrophe persists so long as the dream continues. The dream that brings so much suffering to the man who is asleep has no terrors for him when he wakes up. Sorrow, joy, fear, anger, greed, delusion, desire, and so on, as well as life and death, pertain to the ego, not to the *Ātman*. The *jīva*, who identifies himself with the body, the senses, the vital airs and the mind and is veiled by them, is none other than the *Ātman* invested with a form largely determined by *guṇa* and *karma*. Obeying the will of the Lord functioning as time, he who is spoken of variously as the *Sūtra*, the Mahat, and so on, undergoes all kinds of experience in the transmigratory life (12-17).

Sundering, with the sword of *jñāna* sharpened by devoted service to the Guru, the ego which makes one identify oneself with the mind and speech, with the vital airs and the body, and which, though assuming many illusory forms, is devoid of reality, the sage roams the earth, desiring nothing. *Jñāna* is discriminating knowledge. It is attained by the study of the Veda, the practice of austerities, personal experience, instruction, and reasoning. It consists in the realization that That which was before the universe came into being and remains after it ends, is what exists in the interim too. It is the One without a second, the material cause of the universe and, as time, the cause of its manifestation. The gold that has been fashioned into many attractive forms remains the gold that it was before it was given these shapes, though now known by various names, and will still be gold when these have been destroyed ;

even thus I stand in regard to the universe. That Fourth alone is real, my friend, Which by Its presence illumines the mind in its three states, the three *guṇas*, and the triple world of cause, effect and agency; and Which alone exists independently. That which did not exist before (creation) and will not exist after (destruction) does not really exist in between, except in name; since that which was produced out of, and made manifest by another, can be only that, in My opinion. The entire world of modifications did not exist before it was created through the instrumentality of *rajas* and made manifest. But the Brahma is intrinsically real, and self-luminous, and so the Brahma Itself appears in multifarious forms as the senses, the subtle elements, the mind and the five gross elements (18-22).

Having thus removed from one's mind all doubts as to the true nature of the Self, by effectively employing all means of attaining discriminating knowledge of the Brahma, and conclusively rejecting the reality of all else other than the Ātman, one should be supremely content in the Bliss of the Self and give up all attachment to the lusting senses. The body cannot be the Ātman, being material; the senses, the gods, the vital airs, the mind, the intellect, the *chitta* and the ego—none of these can be the Ātman either, since all of them are dependent on food; nor can air, water, fire, *ākāśa* and earth, the objects of the senses, or Prakṛti, be the Ātman. To the man who has won clear-eyed understanding of My essential being, what good can accrue from the senses, which are the products of the *guṇas*, if they are at rest, or what evil if they are distracted? How can the sun be affected by clouds, whether they gather or scatter? As the sky remains unsoiled by the characteristic qualities of air, fire, water, or earth, or the transient influence of the seasons, so is the Immutable, which is beyond the ego, untouched by the taint of *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*, which leads to the ego's experiencing the transmigratory life. While that is so, attachment to the objects of the senses, the product of Māyā, should be eschewed, till the passions which deeply colour the mind are expelled by the cultivation of an unshakable attachment to Me. Just as a disease that is neglected half-cured,

shoots up again, bringing endless torment, so does the mind, in which are imbedded the passions that have not been burnt out and the impulses to action that they breed, and which forms all sorts of attachments. It brings about the downfall of the man who has not achieved perfect self-knowledge through yoga. But, though frustrated by obstacles in the guise of men, which the gods put in their way, such men succeed in perfecting their yoga in some future birth by virtue of their past efforts; they never resort to *karma* again (23-29).

The body, prompted by some impulse or other, goes on doing *karmas* and undergoing the changes they effect, till death overtakes it. But the enlightened man, though he remains in the body, is unaffected by what it does, being free from all desires because he enjoys the Bliss of the Self. Conscious only of the Self, he is not aware of what the body does, following its natural disposition—whether it is standing, sitting, moving, lying down, pissing, eating or doing anything else. Even though he might notice the objects of the outward-ranging senses, the wise man dismisses as unreal everything other than the Ātman, concluding so from the very fact of their multifariousness; as does the sleeper, on waking, his vanishing dream-visions. The manifold wrought by nescience out of *guṇa* and *karma*, which has been regarded before the dawn of knowledge as not different from the Ātman, because it was an illusory appearance in It, is negated by knowledge, My friend. The Ātman itself was neither changed nor restored to a pre-existing state. Sunrise only removes the darkness that veils men's eyes; it does not produce the objects that become visible; even thus the knowledge that reveals Me, the Ātman, serves but to dispel the darkness of nescience that clouds the *jīva's* understanding. This Ātman is self-luminous. It knows no birth. It is unfathomable in Its wisdom and immeasurably vast. It comprehends all experience. It is the One without a second, from which speech retires baffled. It is under Its prompting that life and speech function. All this seeing of difference, where there is only the Ātman, one and indivisible, is an illusion of the mind, since it could have no substratum other than one's own Self. It is the conceited men

who preen themselves on a little learning that believe that the world of multiplicity, distinguished by name and form and composed of the five elements, has reality, and that statements to the contrary must be treated as merely eulogistic, though there is no warrant whatever for regarding them in that way (30-37).

If the body of a man who is engaged in yoga but has not yet fulfilled his aim, is invaded by disease or other misfortune, remedies may be found in the following ways. Some troubles may be overcome by *yogic* concentration, some by the adoption of appropriate *āsanas* along with breath-control, others by austerities, spells or medicines. He should steadily fight against vicious tendencies in himself by meditating on Me, chanting My names, and by putting himself under the tutelage of adepts in yoga. Some men determinedly achieve, by these and other means, physical fitness and perennial youth, and devote themselves to various *yogic* practices for securing particular supernatural powers. But no wise man will put his trust in these methods, since they are bound to be wasted effort; the body being perishable like the fruit of the tree. If the constant practice of yoga should bring the body to such perfection, the sensible man who is devoted to Me will not pin his faith to it, neglecting the practice of *samādhi*. The yogi who puts his trust in Me and devotes himself to the practice of yoga in the way that I have described, will never be held up by obstacles, because, enjoying the Bliss of the Self as he does, he will have no desires (38-44).

CHAPTER XXIX

UDDHAVA DEPARTS FOR BADARI

Uddhava said: 'It seems to me that the practice of yoga is all but impossible for one who has not controlled his mind. Explain, O Achyuta, in such a way that one can easily follow, how a man may find easy self-fulfilment. Most yogis, O Lord of the lotus eyes, are sore afflicted by their vain efforts to restrain the mind; even if they succeed in doing it, they are spent with the effort. That is most certainly the reason why men of discrimination devote themselves joyfully to Thy lotus feet that fill one

with bliss, O Master and Ruler of the universe; they are not caught in the toils of Thy Māyā and do not wax proud on account of their proficiency in yoga or *karma*. How can one be surprised, O Achyuta That befriendest all that is, that Thou shouldst have put Thyself into the hands of Thy humble servants who sought no refuge but Thee, when Thou, Whose footsoul is chafed by the crests of the opulent crowns of the Lords of the universe, wert glad of the company of the beasts of the forest? Who that knows what Thou dost for him, could possibly withhold his homage from Thee, the Animator in all beings, the beloved Lord and Ruler, Who bestows all that the heart can wish on those who put their trust in Him? How can one devote oneself to aught else but Thee, whether for the sake of enjoyment or for winning release? What indeed can we not have, who take the dust of Thy feet? A life-time of Brahmā would not suffice, O Lord, even for those who know the Brahma, to repay their debt to Thee, when they in the ecstasy of bliss recall what Thou hast done for them, Thou Who as the Light of the spirit within and as the Guru without, purgest all creatures of their impurities and revealest to them 'Thy essential being' (1-7).

Srī Suka said : Thus besought by the loving Uddhava, the Paramount Lord of the universe, who takes three forms, employing His different powers, and Whose plaything the world is, replied affectionately, with a charming smile. The Lord said : Very good, my dear, I shall tell you of the duties devolving on My devotee, which are auspicious and pleasant in the doing and bring him victory over stubborn death when practised faithfully. Dedicating his mind and intellect to Me and delighting body and soul in discharging the duties that lead to Me, he should do all *karmas* with Me in mind and for My sake. Let him frequent the regions which are holy by reason of saintly devotees' sojourning there, and do those things which My devotees, be they gods, *Asuras*, or men, do. He should, either by himself or in concert with others, have my festivals, seasonal, occasional and annual, celebrated with music, dance and other features that bespeak the magnificence of great kings. With a mind that is pure, he should see Me, the Lord

seated in the hearts of all creatures and of himself, pervading all things within and without, being like the sky unobscured by aught else. Thus using the eye of knowledge and seeing Me in all creatures, and honouring them accordingly, and looking with an equal eye on Brahmana and Pulkasa, on the despoiler and the supporter of the Brahmana, on the sun and the spark of fire, on the gentle and the cruel, he will be accounted truly wise. When a man constantly thinks of all men as being none but Me, the feelings of jealousy, envy and disdain are extinguished in him, as well as egotism. Unmindful of his own friends' mocking, discarding notions of prestige and the false shame that goes with them, let him cast himself down like a stick on the ground in prostration before every creature, down to the dog and the *chandāla*, the cow and the ass. He should worship Me in this wise with all his faculties of body, speech and mind so long as the feeling that it is Me that he sees in all creatures does not become an ingrained habit with him. By training himself to see the Supreme Lord in everything, all the world is transformed into the Brahma for him. Seeing the Brahma everywhere, he is freed from all doubts and questionings, and all activity ceases for him (8-18).

Of all the ways and means available, this one that I have described, of recalling My presence in all creatures with every exercise of body, mind and speech, is in My view the best. Uddhava, My friend, when one has begun cultivating this disinterested devotion to Me, nothing of it is wasted, since I myself decided that this was the best of *dharma*s, because it was free from the taint of the *guṇa*s. Even the effort that is futile, such as what is prompted by fear or other such cause, becomes an act of devotion if dedicated to Me, the Supreme, with no ulterior aim, O best of men. The wisdom of the man of sense and the intelligence of the man of resource should prove themselves by the ability to use this illusory and perishable frame to win Me, the Immortal and the Ever-true, in this very life. I have given you, both in summary form and in detail, the teaching regarding the Brahma, which is beyond the reach of even the gods. I have explained it clearly, and with reasons. The man

who understands it will be freed from all doubts and delivered from bondage (19-24).

He who meditates on this discourse containing your question and the clear answers I have given, will attain the Supreme and Everlasting Brahma, Which is the mystery in the heart of the Veda. To him who expounds this to My devotees I shall give even Myself, and that too of My own accord, since he will be imparting to them the plenary knowledge of the Brahma. He who reads aloud this flawless and supremely sanctifying discourse every day, will be perfected in holiness and will reveal Me to others by the light of the lamp of knowledge. The man who hears this teaching every day with an attentive and tranquil mind will give his supreme devotion to Me and will no longer be bound by *karma*. And now, Uddhava, My friend, have you gained clear knowledge of the Brahma? Have you shaken yourself free from delusion and the sorrow that is begotten of the mind? You should not impart this teaching to the pretender, the unbeliever, the crafty, the unzealous, the undevout, and the ill-bred. You may instruct him who is free from these blemishes, devoted to the Brahmanas, dear to you, good and pure, and to women; and you may impart it to Sūdras, if they have devotion. The man who thirsts for knowledge will have nothing more to learn when he knows this, even as one who has quaffed the nectar of immortality will ask for no other drink. For you, my son, I am all the four ends of life that other men attain through *Jñāna*, *Karma* and *Yoga*, through husbandry and the exercise of sovereign power. When a man, renouncing all works, dedicates himself to Me, I wish to exalt him above all men; forthwith he wins immortality and becomes My peer (25-34).

Srī Suka said: When he, to whom the path of yoga had thus been shown, heard those words of the illustrious Lord, he stood before him with clasped hands, tears streaming from his eyes, but uttered no word, his throat choked by love. Then summoning fortitude to his aid and calming the tumult of love in his heart, he, who regarded himself as supremely blest, addressed the great Chief of the Yadus with joined palms, O King, touching his lotus feet with his head. Uddhava

said : ' The darkness of error that I had dwelt in has been put to flight by Thy mere presence. Could cold, darkness and fear overwhelm one who sits by the fire, O Sire of Brahmā ? In Thy infinite compassion Thou hast restored to me, Thy servant, the shining light of Self-knowledge. Who that realizes the blessing that Thou has conferred on him can leave the sanctuary of Thy feet for other refuge ? The strong bond of affection that held me bound to the Dāsārhas, Vṛshnis, Andhakas and Sātvatas, a bond that Thou hadst forged by Thy Māyā to further creation, has now been sundered by Thee Thyself by (bestowing upon me) the weapon of Self-knowledge. Salutations to Thee, O Master-yogi. Teach me, who have thrown myself on Thy mercy, to love Thy lotus feet with a deathless love' (35-40).

The Lord told him : ' Go to My hermitage known as Badari, Uddhava, I wish it. Your sins dispelled by the mere sight of the Alakanandā, which carries the water that washed My feet, you shall live there, My friend, purifying yourself by bathing in its waters and performing *āchamana*, wearing tree bark, sustaining yourself on forest produce, desiring nothing in the possession of the supreme happiness, patiently suffering the impact of the pairs of opposites, conducting yourself in an exemplary manner, keeping your senses under control and your mind tranquil. Living thus, and using your undistracted intellect, you will gain knowledge and illumination. Making what you have learnt from Me part of your experience by deliberation and reflection, concerning yourself with naught but Me in speech or thought, you shall practise the Dharma that leads to Me. By doing that you will pass beyond the courses determined by the three *guṇas* and reach Me' (41-44).

Srī Suka said : Thus told by Hari, to think of Whom is to be freed from *samsāra*, Uddhava walked round Him reverently before departing ; his heart melting within him, he laid his head on His feet and drenched them with his tears, though he had put away from him joy and sorrow alike. Dreading the separation from Him Whom he loved with a love that would not be denied, unable to tear himself away from Him, he suffered ago-

nies. Then, placing upon his head His Master's sandals, and repeatedly prostrating himself before Him, he departed. Lodging Him in the heart's core, the great devotee went to Viśālā. There he practised austerities and reached the abode of Hari, as He Who is the friend of all that lives had taught him (45-47).

He who imbibes with implicit faith even a little of this nectar of *ĵnāna* collected from the Ocean of Bliss for the benefit of His devotee by Krishna, to Whose feet the master-yogis pay homage, finds release, as indeed do all men who associate with him. I offer my salutations to the Supreme Spirit, the First Cause, Whom the world knows as Krishna, and Who, like the bee, collected from the Veda that He had Himself given forth, the knowledge and illumination that are its supreme essence, as well as nectar from the ocean, and fed His devotees thereon (according to their need), to redeem them from *samsāra* and the ills of life (48-49).

CHAPTER XXX

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE YADUS

The King asked : ' When the great devotee Uddhava had left for the forest, what did the exalted Lord, Who calls all creatures into existence, do at Dvārakā ? When His own race lay under the Brahmanas' curse, how did the great Yādava Chief give up that body of His which was the darling of all eyes ; from which women, who had looked on it, could never retrieve their gaze ; which, entering (by report) through the orifice of the ear, was entrenched in the hearts of the good and never departed thence ; the glory of which brings a new radiance into the words of poets and, need one say, wins them the applause of the world ; by the mere sight of which, seated in Jishnu's (Arjuna's) chariot, the men who fell in battle were transfigured into its likeness ? ' (1-3).

The sage answered : Seeing the dire portents in the sky, on earth and in the upper air, Krishna spoke to the Yādavas assembled in Sudharmā. The Lord said : ' These dread portents that we have seen in Dvāravatī are the flags that Death flies. We must not tarry here a moment longer, O Yadu Chiefs. Let the women,

children and old men go hence to Sankhoddāra; we shall go to Prabhāsa where the Sarasvati flows west. Bathing there and purifying ourselves, we shall fast and worship the gods with collected minds, bathing and anointing them and making food offerings. Receiving the blessings of worthy Brahmanas, we shall honour them with gifts of cows, land, gold, clothes, elephants, horses, chariots and houses. This is the time-honoured way of averting evil, and the best means of securing our welfare. Worship of the gods, the Brahmanas and the cows conduces to the uplift of all beings.' Hearing the words of the Foe of Madhu, the Yadu elders unanimously assented. They took ship and crossed the sea and went on to Prabhāsa in their chariots. And there the Yādavas did with heart-felt devotion all that the Lord, their great Chief, had commanded, and everything they could think of to promote their welfare (4-11).

Then, their wits confounded by fate, they indulged in a drinking bout, swilling great draughts of *maireya*, the sweet and heady liquor whose fumes ravish the senses. And there broke out a great strife among the proud warriors fuddled with strong drink and rendered senseless by Krishna's Māyā. Carried away by wrath, they fought on the sea-shore with bow and sword, *bhalla* and mace, javelin and spear, intent on killing. Riding in chariots, on elephant-back and in vehicles drawn by asses, camels, bulls, buffaloes and even men and mules, which carried flags that could be seen constantly flitting, those turbulent fighters closed in and hit each other with arrows, as elephants fight with their tusks in the forest. With mounting anger, Pradyumna and Sāmba, Aniruddha and Sātyaki, Subhadra and Sangrāmajit, the two formidable Gadas, and Sumitra and Suratha met in fierce encounter. Nisitha, Ulmukha and others, of whom Sahasrajit, Satajit and Bhānu were the chief, sought out and attacked each other under the blind compulsion of pride, their minds blotted out by the will of Mukunda. Dāsārhakas, Vṛshṇis, Andhakas, Bhojās, Sātvas, Madhus, the inhabitants of the Arbuda, Mathura and Soorasena regions, the Visarjanas, Kukuras and Kuntis, attacked one another, all affection cast aside. Son fought with father, brother with brother,

uncle with nephew, grandson with grandfather, cousin with cousin. Friends and comrades fought, and kinsmen, maddened, slaughtered each other (12-19).

When the arrows were exhausted, the bows broken and other weapons gone, they tore up reeds by the fistful. With those reeds, which were hard as adamant in their hands, and wielded like iron clubs, they attacked each other viciously. When Krishna sought to prevent them, they fell upon Him. Lost to all sense, they looked upon Balabhadra as their foe and rushed to the attack with upraised weapons. Enraged by this, the two moved about the battlefield, wielding the reeds like iron bars and laying about them with a will. The jealous spite of those on whom the Brahmanas had laid their curse, and who were under the spell of Krishna's Māyā, led the race to destruction, even as the fire from the bamboo clump destroys the forest. When thus all their clans had been destroyed, Keśava was satisfied that what had remained of the earth's burden had been removed. Rama, concentrating His mind on the Supreme Spirit, and effecting the union of the *Ātman* with the *Paramātmān*, shuffled off His mortal vesture on the sea-shore (20-26).

Seeing that Rama had departed, the exalted Lord, the son of Devaki, sat in silence at the foot of a peepul tree, assuming His shining form with four arms, and dispelling with His radiance, which was like a smokeless flame, the darkness of the four quarters. He sat with the left foot, red as the lotus, resting on the right thigh; clad in a pair of silks like burnished gold, and looking like the dark-blue rain-cloud; gracious of mien, with a smile on the lotus-face adorned with black curls, and eyes charming as the lotus, and the sparkling fish-shaped ear-pendants; resplendent with girdle and sacred thread, with crown and bracelet, armlet and ankle, with pearl necklace and signet ring and the Kausthubha jewel; with the garland of wild blooms covering the whole body, and attended by His unique weapons in their concrete forms. As He sat thus, the fowler Jarā hit the foot, mistaking it for a deer, since it resembled the face of one, with an arrow whose tip was made of the lump of iron which was the remnant of the iron pestle. Then he saw the gracious

personage with the four arms, and was terrified when he realized his monstrous guilt. He threw himself down at the feet of the Foe of the Asuras, and with bowed head cried, 'I, wretch that I am, did this unwittingly, O Madhusūdana; be pleased, O illustrious Lord, O flawless One, to pardon the transgression of this wicked creature. I have wronged Thee, O Vishnu, mere thought of Whom, they say, wipes out the darkness of men's ignorance. Kill instantly, O Lord of Vaikuntha, this sinner who hunts animals, so that I may not again offend against the good. When neither Brahmā nor His sons Rudra and others, nor the seers of the Veda can comprehend the working of Māyā, Thy instrument, which blinds them, how can we, born wicked, lightly essay the task of explaining this mystery?' (27-38).

The Lord told him, 'Have no fears, Jarā, get up; you have done just what I wanted. By My will you shall go to the heaven where men who have done meritorious deeds abide.' Thus told by the exalted Lord Krishna, Who assumes a form at His will, he walked round Him thrice in all reverence, and bowing his head at His feet, ascended to heaven in an aerial car. Dārūka, seeking Śrī Krishna, had discovered where He had gone, from the wind which brought the scent of the holy basil, and he had gone in that direction. When he saw his master seated at the foot of the peepul tree, surrounded by His weapons, which hurt the eyes by their brilliance, he jumped down from the chariot; his heart flooded with love and his eyes streaming, he threw himself at His feet, saying 'Not seeing Thy lotus feet, O Lord, my eyes lost their power, engulfed in darkness. Like a man walking at night when the moon has set, I knew not where I was going, and could find no peace.' Even as the charioteer was saying this, the chariot with the Garuda ensign rose into the sky before his wondering gaze, with horses, flag and all, and it was followed by the celestial weapons of Vishnu. And Janārdana told the amazed charioteer, 'Go to Dvāravatī, charioteer; tell our relations how our kin perished at each other's hands. Tell them of Sankarshana's passing, and of My own state; adding, "None of you or your relations should remain in Dwārakā; the ocean

will engulf the city of the Yadus which I have abandoned. Taking with you your dependants, and our parents too, go to Indraprastha under the protection of Arjuna." As for you, apply yourself wholeheartedly to the practice of the Dharma that leads to Me, intent on self-realization, and indifferent to worldly ties; remember that all this is the work of My Māyā, and rest in peace.' Thus bidden, he walked round Him in all reverence, repeatedly prostrated himself before Him, took and placed His feet on his head, and sadly departed for the city (39-50).

CHAPTER XXXI

THE LORD'S ASCENT TO VAIKUNTHA

Srī Suka said : Then in their great eagerness to witness the Lord's departure, there came to that spot Brahmā and Bhava along with Bhavāni, Indra and the gods, the sages and the Progenitors, the manes, the Siddhas and the Gandharvas, the Vidyādharas and the great serpents, the Chāraṇas, the Yakshas and the Rakshasas, the Kinnaras, Apsarases, and Brahmanas. They sang in an ecstasy of devotion and recited the tale of Sauri's birth and exploits, as they rained showers of flowers, O King, crowding the sky with row upon row of aerial cars (1-4).

On seeing the Grandsire and those others who represented His various powers, the exalted Lord, the Omnipresent, united His Self with the Ātman, and closed His lotus eyes. Without burning up in the fire of *yogic* concentration that body of His in which the worlds delight, and which it is auspicious for the world to keep in mind and meditate upon, He reached His own home. The celestial kettledrums sounded, and there fell showers of flowers from the sky. Truth, Dharma, courage, fame and sovereignty followed Him, and departed from the earth (5-7).

The utmost that Brahmā and the other gods were vouchsafed was but a fleeting glimpse of Krishna, Whose ways are mysterious, as He entered His own abode. The gods could no more follow Krishna's movement than men can keep track of the lightning flashing through the sky from the massed clouds. Brahmā, Rudra and others were filled with wonder, thinking of that mighty *yogic*

power of Hari, and they departed to their own worlds, extolling it (8-10).

You will realize, O King, that such acts of the Supreme Lord as taking birth among men and disappearing from their midst are but a show, like the actor's, put up by His power of Māyā. Creating the world out of Himself and entering it, He diverts Himself, and at the end retracts it into Himself and abides in His own glory. Was He helpless to protect Himself, think you, Who fetched back from the world of Yama His Guru's son, who had been taken there, with his old mortal body complete ; Who as the Refuge of the supplicant, was your saviour when you were burnt by the mightiest of all weapons ; who was victorious over Īśa Himself, the Death of death, and sent the fowler, clothed in this mortal body, to heaven ? Even though He, possessing every power, was the sole Author, needing no aid, of the preservation, creation and destruction of all creatures, He did not want to remain in the body here as sole survivor of His race ; He wanted to show, to those who are devoted to the Self, how worthless this mortal body is, and how infinitely superior are the worlds of light. He who on rising in the morning recites with faith and devotion this account of the unique manner of Krishna's passing will himself attain that supreme goal (11-14).

Reaching Dvārakā, Dāruka fell at the feet of Vasudeva and Ugrasena and bathed them with his tears, feeling forlorn at losing Krishna. He told them, O King, of the wholesale destruction of the Vṛṣṇis. On hearing that, the desolated people swooned in grief. Distracted at the loss of Krishna, they rushed to where their dead kinsmen lay, beating their heads. Devaki, Rohiṇi, and Vasudeva, not seeing their sons Krishna and Rama there, fainted in a paroxysm of grief. Unable to bear the separation from the Lord, they laid down their lives. And the women, embracing their lords, ascended the funeral pyre. The spouses of Rama burnt themselves in the fire embracing His body ; likewise the wives of Vasudeva, embracing his, and the daughters-in-law of Hari, those of Pradyumna and the rest. Rukmiṇi and the other spouses of Krishna entered the fire, their minds

intent on Him. Arjuna suffered deeply, bereaved of his supreme and well-beloved comrade Krishna, but he consoled himself, recalling Krishna's true words, which could never be fruitless. He had the obsequies done in due form, as ordained, for his relations, whose progeny had been destroyed. And the sea engulfed in a trice Dvārakā, which the exalted Lord had abandoned—all of it, except the gracious home of the Lord, O King, merely to think of which is to be purified of all sins and to receive all blessings. There the exalted Lord, the Slayer of Madhu, abides for ever. Taking with him the women, children and old men, who had survived the holocaust, Dhananjaya established them at Indraprastha and crowned Vajra there. Hearing from Arjuna of the destruction of their relations, your grand-parents, O King, departed on the last long journey, leaving you to continue the line (15-26).

The man who relates with faith the tale of this incarnation of Vishnu, the God of gods, and His exploits therein, is freed from all sins. He who extols the heroic deeds recorded here and elsewhere, of Hari, done in this delectable incarnation, and His childhood pranks, to recall which is to be filled with bliss, will be blessed with a rare devotion to Him Who is the goal of the Paramahamsas (27-28).

(Here ends the *Eleventh Book of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*)

SRIMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

BOOK XII

CHAPTER I

THE ROYAL DYNASTIES OF THE KALI AGE

The King asked : ' When Krishna, the ornament of the Yadu race, had departed for His own home, what kingly dynasty ruled the earth, O sage ? Be pleased to tell me' (1).

Srī Suka answered : Puranjaya¹, the last of the race of Brhadratha, will be killed by his minister Sunaka, who will place on the throne his son Pradyota. He will have a son Pālaka ; whose son Viśākharūpa will have a son Rājaka, and he a son Nandivardhana. These five kings, known as the Pradyotas, will rule the earth for a hundred and thirty-eight years. Then Śiśunāga will be king, followed by his son Kākavarṇa ; he will have a son Kshemadharma, whose son will bear the name Kshetrajna. He will have a son Vidhisāra, and to him will be born Ajātaśatru. He will have a son Dharbaka, and he a son Ajaya. Ajaya will have a son Nandivardhana, and the latter a son Mahānandi. These ten kings of the Śiśunāga line will rule the earth for three hundred and sixty years in Kali, O foremost of the Kurus (2-8).

Mahānandi will have a son Nanda, born of a Sūdra wife, who will be exceedingly powerful, being the master of a Mahāpadma², and he will destroy the Kshattriyas. The Kings who come to rule thereafter will be unrighteous men, hardly to be distinguished from Sūdras. Mahāpadma will bring all the earth under one umbrella, like a second Bhārgava, and will rule over it, with none to transgress his command. He will have eight sons, the eldest being Sumālya, and they will rule the earth

¹ Ripunjaya (also known as Puranjaya) was the last king mentioned in the Ninth Book chronicling the kings of the Lunar Race. ² It may mean either an army of that size or the treasure so named.

for a hundred years. A certain Brahmana will extirpate the nine Nandas, who had put their trust in him.¹ When that clan is extinct, the Mauryas will rule the earth in Kali. The same Brahmana will install Chandragupta on the throne. He will have a son Vārisāra, who will be succeeded by Aśokavardhana. He will have a son Suyāsa and he a son Sangata. He will be succeeded by his son Sālīśūka. The latter will have a son Sōmaśarmā. His son Satadhanvā will succeed him, and he will be followed by Bṛhadratha. These ten² kings, the Mauryas, will rule over the earth for a hundred and thirty-seven years in Kali, O son of the Kurus (9-15).

Agnimitra will then be king, followed by Sujyeshtha. Vasumitra, Bhadraka and Pulinda will then rule in succession; then Ghosha, and his son Vajramitra after him. The latter will have a son, Bhāgavata, and to him will be born Devabhūti. These, the Sungas, will rule the earth for more than a hundred years³ (16-18).

Then the earth will fall into the power of the Kaṇvas, men of little merit. Having slain Devabhūti, the Sunga, a rake, his minister Vāsudeva of the Kaṇva clan, a very shrewd man, will himself become king. He will have a son, Bhūmitra, and he a son Narayana. To the latter will be born a son known to fame as Suśarmā. The kings of the Kaṇva line will rule the earth for three hundred and forty-five years in Kali-yuga. Killing Suśarmā (the last of the Kaṇvas), his servant Bali, a Śūdra and an Andhra, a very wicked man, will rule the earth for some time. After him his brother Krishna will become ruler. He will be succeeded by his son, Śrīśāntakarna, and the latter by his son Paurṇamāsa, and he by his son Lambodhara, who will be followed by his son Sibilaka. Meghasvāti, Sibilaka's son, will succeed him, and he will be followed by his son Atamāna. Then will follow in succession Anishtakarmā, Hāleya, his son Talaka, Talaka's son Purīṣabhīru, and the latter's son

¹ S. (alt.) 'who were celebrated'. He thinks the reference is to Chāṇakya. ² Including Dasaratha, the fifth of the line, mentioned in the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, though omitted here. (S.) ³ S. reads *varsha-śatādhikam* as *dāśa-varsha-śatādhikam*, and explains that it stands for one hundred and twelve years actually. The non-committal interpretation favoured by N. is followed in the translation.

King Sunandana; then Chakora, and after him eight others¹ (bearing various names) of the same family, of whom Sivasvāti, subduer of the foe, will be the youngest. He will be succeeded by his son Gomatiputra, and Purimān will succeed the latter; and after him will come Medaśiras, Sivaskanda and his son Yajnaśiras, and the latter's son Vijaya; then Chandravijna, and Lomadhi after him. These thirty kings will rule the earth for four hundred and fifty-six years, O son of the Kurus (19-28).

Then seven Ābhīras, kings of Avabhṛti, ten Gardhabhins, and sixteen Kankas, all of them exceedingly covetous men, will be rulers in succession. These will be succeeded by eight Yavanas, four Turushkas, ten Gurundas and eleven Mounas. Of these the Mounas will rule the earth for three centuries, after the others had between them reigned for 1099 years, my friend. When they are dead, there will rule in the city of Kilikila in succession the Kings Bhutānanda, Vangiri, Siśunandi, his brother Yaśonandi and Pravīraka, for a hundred and six years. These will be followed by their thirteen sons known as the Bāhlikas. They will be succeeded by the Kshattriya Pushpamitra and his son Durmitra. Then there will rule, as contemporaries in their several realms, by whose names they are known, seven Āndhras, seven Kosalas, and the kings of Vidura and Nishada, all descended from the Bāhlikas. Then the Magadhas will be ruled by Viśvasphoorji, known to fame as the second Puranjaya. He will reduce the four *varṇas* to the level of Pulindas, Yadus and Madrakas.² The ill-conditioned man will rule over a people consisting predominantly of those outside the three *varṇas*. Possessed of great strength, he will extirpate the Kshattriyas and rule from the city of Padmāvati over the whole region from Gangādvāra to Prayāga (29-37).

The first three *varṇas* living in the Saurashtra, Avanti, Ābhīra, Sūra, Arbuda and Mālva regions, will be devoid of sacraments like the *upanayanam*; and the kings will be mostly Sūdras. On the banks of the Sindhu and the

¹ This follows the reading 'navamo' for 'bahavo.' ² S. (v. r.) 'He will create other *varṇas* known as Pulindas, Yadus and Madrakas.'

Chandrabhāgā, in Kaunti and the satrapy of Kashmir, there will rule Sūdras, Vrātyas and such like, and barbarians, none of them conforming to the Vedic rule. These rulers, who will be contemporaries, will be hardly better than foreigners, O King; they will be unrighteous and untruthful, niggardly and implacable; they will slaughter women and children, cows and Brahmanas. Coveting other men's wives and goods, perpetually oscillating between the extremes of joy and sorrow, they will be weak-willed and short-lived. Unredeemed by sacraments, abjuring prescribed rites, possessed by restlessness and ignorance, these barbarians in the guise of Kshattriyas will prey upon their subjects. The people ruled by them will take after them in disposition, conduct and talk; and they will suffer attrition, harassed by the kings and by each other (38-43).

CHAPTER II

THE ADVENT OF KALKI

Srī Suka went on : Then day by day righteousness, truth, purity, forbearance and compassion will decay, O King, thanks to all-powerful time; so will length of life, strength and power of memory. In Kali wealth alone exalts a man's birth, breeding and qualities; and strength is the proof of virtue and justice. Physical attraction determines marriage. Business means devious dealing. Excellence in man or woman is judged by the skill in love-making. The sacred thread makes the Brahmana. *Āśrama* is a matter of symbols¹; change from one *āśrama* to another is effected by changing these. Your suit is weak and is lost if you cannot support it with a bribe. Loquacity passes for learning. Poverty (in one who is charged with an offence) is a proof of guilt, and hypocrisy of honesty. Mating is marriage. Bathing is for self-adornment. The sanctity of waters depends on their distance. The hair on the head is worn for its beauty. To cram one's maw is the chief end of life. Audacity is the stamp of truth. To maintain one's family by hook or by crook is to be accounted clever. Dharma is cultivated for name and fame. When the

¹ Such as staff, water-bowl, etc.

earth is thus filled with degenerate folk, whoever is strong becomes the ruler, be he a Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaiśya, or Sūdra. And the subjects, despoiled of their women and wealth by avaricious and pitiless Kshatriyas, who behave like robbers, flee to the mountains and forests, where they subsist on vegetables, roots, flesh and wild honey, fruits, flowers and seeds. Plagued by drought and famine and unjust exactions, they perish from cold and biting winds, from sun and rain and hoar-frost, and by mutual slaughter. They are miserable from hunger and thirst, disease and carking care. Thirty or even twenty years is accounted long life in Kali (I-II).

When as a result of the evils of Kali the bodies of men are stunted, when the *dharma*s of *varṇa* and *āśrama* and the Vedic way of life have fallen into decay and men are mostly given to heretical opinions, and kings are hardly to be distinguished from thieves; when people take to stealing, lying, inflicting wanton injury, and doing such other things to maintain themselves; when all *varṇas* live like Sūdras; when cattle are as diminutive as she-goats; when all *āśramas* have become more or less like that of the householder; when connections by marriage are practically all the relations that one acknowledges; when plants are minute in size and trees look like the *samī* plant; when the clouds produce little but lightning and the homes no longer know good works¹; when in this manner Kali has almost run its course, and men's ways are past bearing, the exalted Lord descends on earth for the protection of Dharma, using His power of *sattva*. Vishnu, the Supreme Lord, Author of all the universe of sentient and non-sentient things, and the Soul in all creatures, is born into this world for safeguarding the Dharma of the good and freeing them from the bondage of *karma*. Kalki will appear in the house of the high-souled Brahmana Vishṇuśāśa, chief of the village of Sambhala. Mounted on the swift steed Devadatta, the Lord of the universe, of unparalleled splendour, subduer of the wicked, possessed of the eight supernatural powers and all the traits of Omnipotence, will sweep over the wide earth, carried by His fleet

¹ 'Śūnya-prāyeshu' (*lit.* practically empty) is thus interpreted by S.

horse, and put to the sword millions of depredators who masquerade as kings. When all the despoilers have been slain, the minds of the people, townsfolk and countrymen alike, will become pure by reason of their inhaling the breeze that carries the thrice-holy fragrance of the unguents adorning Vāsudeva's body. When they have lodged the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, the embodiment of *sattva*, in their hearts, the children they beget will be sturdy. The moment that sees the advent of Hari, Lord of Righteousness, as Kalki will usher in Kṛta Yuga, and a new race of good men. The commencement of Kṛta Yuga will be marked by the presence of the sun, the moon and Jupiter in the same house with the constellation Pushya (12-24).

I have now given you a brief account of the kings of the solar and lunar races, past, present and future. From the time¹ of your birth to the coronation of Nanda it will be one thousand one hundred and fifteen years. The constellation that appears at night between the two stars of the Great Bear that are the first to become visible at dawn, and in the same longitude, is the one with which the Great Bear remains associated for a hundred terrestrial years. At the present time, when you are Ruler, the Great Bear is in conjunction with the constellation Magha. Under that conjunction, when the exalted Lord Vishnu's glorious figure, known as Krishna, of *sattva* all compact, departed for Vaikuntha, the age of Kali began, in which people's minds delight in sinning. So long as the Lord of Rāmā remained here and His lotus feet touched the earth, Kali could not, it need hardly be said, overrun the earth. With the progress of the Great Bear in Magha began the Kali Age proper, which will last twelve hundred celestial years. When the Great Bear moves into Pūrva-āshādhā from the time of Nanda onwards, the power of Kali will greatly increase. Those who know the past say that Kali began on the same day and at the very moment when Krishna left for His heavenly abode (25-33).

When the fourth *yuga* comes to a close at the end of a thousand celestial years, and the minds of men are ripe

¹ S. points out that, according to the details given in the Ninth Book, the interval between Parikshit and Nanda should be 1498 years.

for revealing the Self, Kṛta will begin again. As the fortunes of the race descended from Manu have, as has been related here, fluctuated on earth, so should those of Vaiśyas, Kṣhatṛiyas and Brahmanas be understood to do in *yuga* after *yuga*. Of all those great souls whose names serve to remind us of them, and who live in the tales of their heroic deeds, only their fame abides on earth. Devāpi, brother of Santanu, and Maru, a scion of the line of Ikshvāku, live in the village of Kalāpa, endowed with supreme *yogic* powers. Coming here at the end of Kali, they will, as instructed by Vāsudeva, make the Dharma based on *varṇa* and *āśrama* prevail as of yore (34-38).

Every four-*yuga* cycle, with its Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali, will influence the life of all creatures in the same manner as aforesaid. Those lords of mankind, of whom I have told you, O King, and others like them looked upon the earth as their possession, but had to leave it behind when they died. That man hardly knew his own interest, surely, who inflicted suffering on living creatures for the sake of his body which, for all that it was known as King, was in the end bound to be known as worm, ordure or ash; for that way lay hell. 'How shall this undivided earth, which was ruled by my ancestors, remain after me in the possession of my son, my grandson and my remote progeny?' Thus these ignorant men, taking for the *Ātman* this body made up of fire, water and food, and looking upon the earth as their property, had in the end to give up both, and they vanished from the scene. Those who lord it over all creatures and exploit the earth by their strength are reduced by time to a tale is told (39-44).

CHAPTER III

MEDICINE FOR THE ILLS OF KALI

Srī Suka continued: Seeing the Kings engrossed in her conquest, the earth laughs. 'Ah! the kings, who are the playthings of death, would conquer me, would they? This ambition of kings, however sagacious, is doomed to failure, since it leads them to put faith in that bubble, the body. "Firmly controlling our senses,

we shall be able to win over the King's ministers and officials, the citizenry, the King's friends and the captains of the elephant force, removing all obstacles. In this way we shall in due course conquer the entire sea-girdled globe." Gripped by this passion, they do not see death waiting at their elbow. Some, having conquered by their strength all the earth bounded by the ocean, launch on further conquests across the seas. How trumpety is this achievement—hardly adequate fruit, one should think, of the conquest of the senses ! For that should bring release. The silly fools would win me by warring, though the Manus, their sons and descendants went the way they came, leaving me perforce behind. The wicked men who think of the kingdom as their inalienable possession quarrel with each other over me, father with son, brother with brother. "The entire earth is mine, not yours, you fool !" Thus vaunting, they attack each other in bitter rivalry and lose their lives for my sake. Pr̥thu, Purūras, Gādhī and Nahusha, Bharata, Arjuna, Māndhātā, Sagara, Rama, Khatvāṅga, Dundumāra and Raghu, Tr̥ṇabindu, Yayāti, Saryāti, Santānu, Gaya, Bhagīrata, Kuvalayāśva, Kakutsa, Naishada, Nrga, Hiranyakaśipu, Vṛttra, Rāvana who made the worlds wail, Namuchi, Sambara, Bhauma, Hiranyāksha, Tāraka and many others, Asuras and kings who lorded it over the earth, who were omniscient, valiant and all-conquering, who had never known defeat themselves, and who had an intense sense of proprietorship in me, nevertheless went the way of all flesh, their ambitions unfulfilled, reduced by time to a tale that is told'. I have related, my lord, these stories of the great ones who, having spread their fame in the three worlds, passed away, to induce distaste for the life of pleasure by exposing its hollowness. But high-sounding rhetoric though they might be, these tales have nothing to do with the supreme truth. He who would cultivate the purest love for Krishna should listen every day, and again and again, to the praises of the illustrious Lord, which destroy all that is inauspicious, wherever they might be sung (1-15).

The King prayed, 'Be pleased to tell me, O sage, how men living in Kali may dissipate the mounting

sins of that age ; also of the *yugas*, their specific characteristics, the signs of dissolution and re-emergence and how the all-powerful and Supreme Lord Vishnu, in the guise of time, works His will' (16-17).

Sri Suka answered : In Kṛta rules plenary Dharma, complete with all the four quarters, enjoying the loyalty of the people of that age. Truthfulness, compassion, austerity and the extension of protection¹ to all creatures—these are the four quarters of that complete Dharma, O King. The people then are contented, compassionate, full of fellow-feeling for all and at peace with themselves. Self-controlled, self-denying, looking on all with an equal eye, they delight in the contemplation of the Ātman and are mostly engaged in it. In the Tretā Yuga, a fourth part of each of the four quarters of Dharma gradually declines, by reason of the growing influence of the four parts of Adharma—untruth, violence, discontent and strife. Then the different *varṇas*, Brahmanas predominating in numbers, are devoted to the practice of rites and austerities and intent on the three ends of life, O King. They are experienced and wise in all that pertains to the practice of *karma*, but averse to excessive cruelty, and not unduly attached to the pleasures of the senses (18-21).

In the Dvāpara Age, Dharma further declines to the extent of one half of its elements, which are austerity, truthfulness, compassion, and the assurance of protection, from the growing power of violence, discontent, lying and hate, the characteristics of Adharma. The *varṇas*, Kshatriyas and Brahmanas predominating, are actuated by love of fame. They are great sacrificers and keen on the learning and teaching of the Vedas ; possessed of wealth and rearing big families, they lead a joyous life.

In Kali only a fourth of each part of Dharma survives; and that too is ultimately extinguished, worsted by the corresponding aspects of Adharma. The people of that age, among whom Sūdras, fishermen and the like predominate, are covetous, given to evil practices, ruthless,

¹ 'Dāna', is interpreted by S. as 'assurance of protection to all beings by the very fact of their being free from likes and hates.' He refers to Book I, where 'śaucha' is used in this sense.

moved by groundless animosities, unlucky and eaten up with desires (22-25).

Sattva, *rajas* and *tamas* are qualities that show themselves in the *jīva*; under the prompting of time, they rise and sink in the mind. You may recognise *Kṛta-yuga* by the fact that the mind, the intellect and the senses are predominantly inclined to the *sāttvic*, and men are drawn to knowledge and austerities. When men are keen on *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kāma*, you should know, O sagacious one, that it is *Tretā*, with its proneness to the *rājasic*. When covetousness, discontent, pride, hypocrisy and envy prevail, and men are attracted to *karma* for the fruits thereof, it is then *Dvāpara*, which inclines to *rajas* and *tamas* (26-29).

The age in which craftiness, untruth, sloth, somnolence, cruelty, despondency, sorrow, delusion, fear and abjectness are seen, is *Kali*, characterized by *tamas*. Because of that, the men of that age are dull-witted, unlucky and given to gourmandizing; they are rakes and paupers; and the women are harlots, and wicked at heart. The countryside is overrun by robbers, the *Veda*s are spoken ill of by heretics, kings prey upon their subjects, the twice-born are lustful and gluttonous. Student celibates do not observe the enjoined discipline and do not lead pure lives; householders take to begging; anchorites make their home in the villages, and religious mendicants show themselves inordinately fond of wealth. Women are stunted in body and voracious eaters; they breed prolifically; they are shameless shrews, thievish, crafty, and of infinite audacity (30-34).

Vile men take to buying and selling. Merchants cheat. Even when there is no emergency, all men look with approval on degrading occupations. Servants desert the best of masters if he is penniless, and masters discard hereditary servants who are past work and cows that have gone sterile. Abandoning their parents, brothers, friends and kinsmen, the men of the *Kali* age, poor-spirited and over-fond of women, have sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law for their confidants, their affections being determined by concupiscence. *Sūdras* receive gifts and make a living by their pretensions to austerity. Unrighteous men, climbing into the seats

of honour, lay down the law in regard to Dharma. In Kali, O King, men are perpetually tormented by anxiety; when food is scarce, they are harried by famine and unjust exactions, and oppressed by fears of drought; pinched for clothes, food, drink, and shelter, denied sexual satisfaction, while such things as bathing or adornment remain unknown luxuries, they look like ghouls. In Kali people will quarrel with each other over a farthing¹, discarding all affection, and they will kill their own folk, and even kill themselves, dearly as they love their life. Men are so mean and self-indulgent, O King, that they do not care to look after their old parents, or provide for their sons, however accomplished these might be (35-42).

Few men in Kali, O King, worship the exalted Lord Achyuta, the supreme World Teacher, at Whose lotus feet are bowed the heads of the Lords of the three worlds, for the minds of men are unsettled by the teachings of the heretics. Men of that age will not worship Him, by uttering Whose name all unconsciously when at the point of death and in extreme pain, or in the act of falling down or stumbling, men have been freed from the fetters of *karma* and have reached the supreme goal. The exalted Lord, the Supreme Spirit, destroys, the moment He comes into the minds of men, the sins due to Kali that they incur through the materials they use, the places they live in, and the activity of their senses. Ensnared in the heart of him who hears His glory spoken and himself recounts it, who meditates upon Him, worships Him and gives Him his love, He destroys the sins accumulated in countless lives. Just as fire removes the discoloration due to the presence of other minerals from the gold that is put into it, even so does Vishnu, seated in the heart, destroy its impurities. Meditation, austerities, breath control, the exercise of loving kindness, bathes in sacred waters, observance of vows, gifts, *japa*—none of these things makes the mind so perfectly pure as the presence of the Lord in it. Therefore, you, O King, who are about to die, should strive your utmost, and with all vigilance, to lodge Keśava in your heart; do that, and you will reach the supreme goal. Those

¹ 'kāṇīkā': a coin worth twenty cowries.

who are at the point of death should concentrate their minds wholly on the Supreme Lord ; for then, He, the soul and support of all that is, makes them one with Himself, my friend. Though Kali is the repository of all evil, it has, O King, this supreme virtue : a man may then free himself from all attachments and attain the Supreme by singing the praises of Krishna. All that a man may win in the Kṛta Yuga by meditation on Vishnu, in Tretā by offering sacrifices, in Dvāpara by devoted service, that he may attain in Kali by extolling Hari (43-52).

CHAPTER IV

THE FOUR PRALAYAS

Sri Suka went on : I have already told you, O King, of the divisions of time, beginning with the atom and going up to the two halves of the life of Brahmā ; and also of the duration of the various *yugas*. I shall now deal with the duration of a Kalpa and of the dissolution that follows. A thousand revolutions of the cycle of four *yugas* is spoken of as a day of Brahmā. That is a Kalpa, and it covers the reigns of fourteen Manus, O ruler of men. At the end of it comes the dissolution, which lasts as long, and is known as a night of Brahmā ; it sees the disappearance of the three worlds. This dissolution is known as *Naimittika*¹, because the Author of the world (Nārāyaṇa) lies down to rest on His couch, Ananta, withdrawing the universe into Himself, and the Self-Existent (Brahmā) rests in Him (1-4).

When the two halves of the life of Brahmā, the chief of the Creators, have passed, then the seven evolving *tattvas* are set for dissolution. This is Prākṛtika Pralaya, O King, in which the cosmic egg, the complex formed by those *tattvas*, is submerged by reason of the causes of its disruption coming into play. For a hundred years, Parjanya (the god of rain) withholds rain from the earth, O King. Lacking food, all creatures, goaded by hunger, begin devouring each other ; harried by time, they suffer attrition. The sun of the dissolution, with

¹ 'due to a specific cause', the cause, here, being Brahmā's sleep (S.)

its terrible rays, sucks up all moisture from the seas, from living beings, and from the earth, and releases no part thereof. Then the fire of the dissolution, issuing from the mouth of Sankarshana, and speeded by the wind, burns up all the worlds, including those below, which have been emptied of life. The globe, attacked above, below and all around, by the flames of fire and sun, glows like a burning ball of cow-dung. Then blows the terrible gale of the dissolution, lasting for more than a hundred years; and the sky, covered by a pall of dust, is smoke-coloured. Masses of parti-coloured clouds let down incessant showers for a hundred years, my friend, with a terrific din. And the universe, huddled within the cosmic egg, lies deluged by the ocean (5-13).

When the world is thus deluged, the waters absorb smell, the distinctive quality of the earth, and the earth, denuded of its smell, gets dissolved. Fire then absorbs the moisture of the waters, which dry up and disappear in it. The air absorbs the colour of fire, which, thus denuded, merges in the air. *Ākāśa* absorbs the distinctive property of the air, which then merges in *ākāśa*, O King. Then *Tāmasa-ahamkāra* absorbs sound, the characteristic of *ākāśa*, whereupon *ākāśa* is merged in it. *Taijasa-ahamkāra* absorbs the sense organs, and the *Vaikārika-ahamkāra* the gods and their functions. The *Mahat* absorbs *Ahamkāra*, and the *guṇas*, *Sattva* and the rest, absorb the *Mahat*; and *Pradhāna*, prompted by time, O King, absorbs the *guṇas* (14-18).

The passage of time is powerless to effect any modifications in *Pradhāna*. Being the cause of all, it is without beginning or end, unmanifest, invariable and imperishable. That entity (*Pradhāna*) which is beyond the reach of speech and thought; in which neither *sattva*, *tamas* and *rajas*, nor *Mahat* and the rest can be distinguished, nor again the vital airs, the intellect, nor the organs of sense and action; which contains no world edifice; and in which are not to be seen the states of waking, dream or sleep, the sky, water, earth, air, fire or sun; that entity, which slumbers as it were, which looks like the void, and baffles comprehension, is spoken of as the source and origin of all things. This is the *Prākṛtic*

dissolution, in which the powers of Purusha and Prakṛti, put to rout by time, are in a state of quiescence (19-22).

It is consciousness, their substratum, which must be regarded as manifesting itself as the intellect, the senses, and the objects of the senses. For these are percepts; they are not different from their cause¹. Besides, what has a beginning and an end has no reality. The light of the lamp, the eye's power of perception, and the visible form cannot exist apart from the element of light. Likewise, the mind, the senses and the objects of perception cannot exist apart from the One Reality (Brahma) Which, however, is radically different from them. The states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep pertain to the mind. The superimposition of these various states on the soul produces the illusion, O King. As rain-clouds appear and disappear in the sky, so does the universe in the Brahma, being made up of parts and having a beginning and an end. The parts, of which all wholes in the universe are composed, are real; for they can be seen apart from the wholes, my friend, as the yarn may be seen apart from the cloth (23-27).

What is apprehended as cause or effect is illusory, being dependent on the existence of the other. So everything that has a beginning and an end is unreal. While the world of difference is no doubt an object of perception, not an atom of it would be seen unless it was illumined by the *Ātman* within. If it could be perceived without that, it would be like the *Ātman* in its self-luminousness, and thus of the same kind. The *Ātman* is not many; if any man thinks it is, he is ignorant. The difference (between the *jīva* and the Brahma) is merely apparent, as in the case of reflections of the same object in bigger or smaller media, or of a luminary and its reflection, or of the vital airs and the winds outside. Just as gold is met in many forms wrought by men for practical uses, so men resorting to Vedic statements and to logic explain the Lord Adhokshaja in terms of multiplicity (28-31).

¹ What is apprehended as cause or effect is unreal; that is so also for the reason that cause and effect are mutually dependent. So everything that has a beginning and an end is unreal (S's *alt.*).

Even as the cloud that is produced by the sun and lit up by it is the dark obstacle that prevents the eye, which borrows its light from the sun, from seeing it, likewise the ego, itself a product of the Brahma, and activated by it, becomes an obstacle in the way of the *jīva*, a fraction of the Brahma, realizing the truth about It. And as the eye is able to see the sun in the sky, when the cloud, the product of the sun, is riven, so the *jīva* recollects its true status when the ego, its limiting adjunct, is destroyed by inquiry into the nature of the Self. When a man gains the plenary experience of the Self, rending with the weapon of discrimination the veil of ego produced by *Māyā*, then he has achieved *Ātyantika-laya* (liberation), my friend (32-34).

Some subtle thinkers point out the continual creation and dissolution of every being from *Brahmā* downwards, O harrier of the foe. The perpetual flux¹ seen in things that are subject to modification is also seen in the body and the like, which are being swiftly borne away by the racing flood of time. They are the cause of their continual creation and dissolution. These continual changes effected by time, the embodiment of the Supreme Lord, which knows neither beginning nor end, escape notice like the transit of the luminaries through the sky (35-38).

I have now told you of the different kinds of dissolution, *Nitya*, *Naimittika*, *Prākṛtika* and *Ātyantika*. Such is the nature of time. I have related compendiously, O best of the Kurus, the tales of the pastimes of the Creator of the worlds, *Nārāyana*, in Whom all souls abide. Even Aja cannot give them out in all their completeness. The man who is hemmed in by the forest fire of multifarious afflictions and who would cross over the sea of *samsāra*, may find no float except the sweet tales that recount the pastimes of the exalted Lord, the Supreme Spirit (39-40).

The sage *Nārāyana*, the Eternal, communicated this corpus of ancient tales, in days long past, to *Nārada*, and he imparted it to *Krishna Dvaipāyana*. And *Bādarāyana*, being pleased with me, taught me, great King, this

¹ Such as a running stream or a burning fire. This is called *Nitya Pralaya*.

collection, which has the exalted Lord for its subject, and which is the equal of the Veda. Sūta (the chronicler) here, will recite it to the sages at the long sacrificial session at Naimiśalaya at the request of Saunaka and others (41-43).

CHAPTER V

SUKA CONCLUDES HIS DISCOURSE

Srī Suka concluded his teaching with these words : Here, repeatedly and without inter-mission, is extolled the exalted Lord Hari, the Soul of the universe, from Whom, in His gladness, Brahmā was born, as, in His wrath, was Rudra. As for you, O King, discard the notion born of ignorance, 'I shall die'. Unlike the body, you were not born into this world, having been non-existent before, nor will you die. Nor will you, having lived, come into being again in your son, grandson, and so on, like the sprout from the seed, since you are different from the body and such like, as is the fire (from the log of wood). As one sees in a dream one's own decapitation, so one sees in the waking state death and dissolution overtaking the body ; and from this one should realize that the *Ātman* knows neither birth nor death. As the space within a pot remains the same space, when the pot is broken, as it had been before the pot came into existence, so when one is dead to the body the *jīva* stands forth as the Brahma again. It is the mind that creates the bodies, qualities and *karmas* of the *jīva* ; it is itself the creature of Māyā ; and the *jīva* owes its transmigratory experience to its being burdened with all these (limiting adjuncts). Light retains the form of the flame of the lamp so long as the correlation of oil, receptacle, wick and fire continues ; likewise it is the transmigratory life that is bound up with the body, which is brought into being by the modes of operation of *rajas*, *sattva* and *tamas*, and which perishes by the same cause ; not the *Ātman*, which is seen therein. For It is self-luminous and different from the gross and subtle bodies, being like space, the ground and support of all phenomena, changeless, eternal, incomparable. You should, O lord of men, reflect in this manner on the

soul in the body, using your intelligence, aided by logic and strengthened by constant meditation on Vāsudeva (1-9).

It is not you that Takshaka will burn at the Brahmana's bidding. Those things that cause death cannot assail the Supreme Lord, the Death of death. 'I am the Brahma, the Supernal Light; That Brahma, the Supreme Goal, is me'; arriving at this realization and identifying your soul with the *Ātman* that is free from all limiting adjuncts, you will see neither Takshaka, as he, licking his chops, seizes your foot with his poisonous fangs, nor your own body, nor the universe as existing apart from the Self. I have now told you, my son, all that you wanted to know about the doings of Hari, the Soul of the universe. Is there anything else that you would like to hear? (10-13).

CHAPTER VI

THE SERPENT SACRIFICE

The Sūta said: Having heard this (Purāṇa) expounded by the sage, the son of Vyāsa, who saw all the universe in the Self, and had equal regard for all that existed, Vishnurāta touched his feet with his bowed head; and then with folded hands he thus addressed him. The King said: 'I have attained the supreme end of life, since you, the soul of compassion, have bestowed your grace on me by yourself imparting to me the knowledge of Hari, Who is without beginning or end. And to me it is hardly surprising that great souls, who cherish Achyuta in their hearts, should shed their grace on the ignorant creatures who suffer the travails of life. For we have heard from your own lips this collection of ancient legends in which the exalted and illustrious Lord is incessantly extolled. I fear not death from Takshaka or others, O Blessed One, having entered the Brahma, the One Self-existent Spirit that you have shown me, where fear is not. Let me with your leave depart this life, stilling the senses and giving my mind, freed from instinctive desires, wholly to Adhokshaja. Shown by you the Supreme Good, the essence of the exalted Lord,

and firmly established in knowledge and illumination, I have had my ignorance dispelled' (1-7).

Thus told, and duly honoured by the King, the Blessed One, the son of Bādarāyaṇa, went his way, accompanied by the mendicants. Then the royal sage Parikshit, concentrating his mind, by an exercise of will, on the Self within, held it steadily in the Paramātmān, and was motionless as a tree, all animation suspended. Seated with his face turned to the North on the bank of the Gangā, on *darbha* grass placed pointing towards the east, the great yogi, freed from all attachments and from doubt, had become one with the Brahma. Takshaka, despatched by the angry son of the Brahmana, was going to the King with intent to kill him, when he met Kaśyapa on the way. Giving him, who knew the cure for poisons, money, he sent him away well pleased, and being able to take any form at will, he disguised himself as a Brahmana and bit the King. The body of the sage-King, who had become one with the Brahma, was instantly reduced to ashes by the fiery poison of the serpent, even as all men were looking. Forthwith rose a great shout of dismay from earth and sky, from the quarters and every other direction. Gods, Asuras and men were all amazed. Then the celestial kettle-drums sounded, and the Gandharvas and Apsarases sang, and the gods rained showers of flowers, with joyous cries of 'Well done !' (8-15).

Coming to know how his father had been consumed by Takshaka, Janamejaya was in a great rage. He performed with the aid of the Brahmanas a great serpent sacrifice, using the appropriate spells. When he saw the great serpents burning in the blazing fire of the snake-sacrifice, Takshaka was sick with apprehension, and he sought refuge with Indra. The King, the son of Parikshit, not seeing Takshaka there, asked the Brahmanas, 'Why is not Takshaka, the vilest of the serpents, burning?' He was told, 'He is being protected, great King, by Sakra, with whom he has sought sanctuary. He has stopped the snake where he is, and that is why he has not fallen into the fire'. Thereupon the son of Parikshit, of dauntless courage, demanded, 'Why then is not Takshaka thrown into the fire along with Indra, O

Brahmanas ?' On hearing that, the Brahmanas engaged in the sacrifice summoned Takshaka along with Indra, with the call, 'Fall into this fire, Takshaka, this very instant, along with Indra, master of the gods'. Those sharp words of the Brahmanas shook Indra where he sat, as well as his aerial car and Takshaka, and left him bewildered. When he saw Indra with his car falling down from the sky along with Takshaka, Brhaspati, the son of Angiras, told the King, 'This king of the serpents must not die at your hands, O king of men. He has quaffed nectar, and is therefore exempt from old age and death. Life, death and the passage to the other world are, for all creatures, of their own contriving, O King; therefore no one can bring happiness or misery to another. If death comes to a man from snake or robber, fire, lightning, hunger, thirst or disease, be sure, O King, that he is but expiating his own *karma*, which has begun to act. Therefore have this sacrifice, which employs black magic, stopped. Innocent snakes have been burnt; all creatures must needs accept their fate' (16-27).

The Sūta said: Thus advised, he acquiesced, out of respect for the words of the great sage. Stopping the snake-sacrifice, he honoured the Lord of Speech. This is Vishnu's great and inscrutable power of *Māyā*, which may not be withstood, and because of which living beings, though they are fractions of his own Self, are deluded into persecuting each other under the stress of emotions which are the product of the *guṇas*. That Self from fear of which *Māyā* dare not show herself where men are engaged constantly in the inquiry into the Self, while she is always dazzling the mind of the man whom she knows to be hypocritical; That Self in regard to which there is no room for those multifarious opinions which rest on *Māyā*, and in which the mind that is given to willing and doubting has no place, neither has action, nor agent, nor the fruit that is produced by them, nor the *jīva* who, being bound up with these, develops the ego; That Self from which multiplicity and the knowledge that negates it are alike excluded—That Self is what the sage should find all delight in, repressing the ego and all other such afflictions. It is this Self that is spoken of as the Supreme Essence of Vishnu,

by those who, having ceased to identify themselves with the body and the like, and feeling no longer attracted to anything other than Self, give up everything that is not the Self, declaring, 'Not-this, not-that'; and it is this which they embrace in their hearts in deep meditation and recognize as their own *Ātman*. It is those who do not entertain the evil notions of 'me' and 'mine' in regard to the body on the one hand and to house and home on the other, that reach this Supreme Self of Vishnu. One should avoid being drawn into contentions. No man may be despised. Nor should one pick up a quarrel with anybody on account of the body. I make my salutations to the blessed Krishna (Dvāpāyana) of the all-comprehending intellect, by meditating on whose lotus feet I gained knowledge of this adored text (28-35).

Saunaka asked: 'Into how many parts were the Vedas divided by Paila and other disciples of Vyāsa, the high-souled teachers of the Veda? Please tell me, good friend' (36).

The Sūta answered: From the space in the heart of Brahmā, the Chief of all Creators, rose Nāda (unarticulated sound) when His mind was stilled in contemplation, that Nāda which any one may perceive by stopping his ear. It is by devout meditation thereon that the yogis free themselves from all taint of what are known as substance, action and agent, and win release from *samsāra*. From that issued the triform 'Om' whose origin is unapparent; it is self-luminous, and it signifies the exalted Lord, the Brahma, Supreme Spirit, Who hears this indistinct Omkāra even when the ear is un-receptive, since He perceives without the aid of the senses. It was this Omkāra which, being made manifest in the space of the heart by the Ātman Itself, revealed the whole corpus of speech. It directly signifies the Supreme Soul, the Brahma, its own Origin. It is the subtle form of the Vedic *mantras*, and the source, eternal and immutable, of the Veda. It has three letters, 'Akāra' and the rest, O exalter of the Bhṛgu, which produce the triad of existents—the *guṇas*, the names (Ṛk., Yajus and Sāman), the objects (the worlds Bhūh, Bhuvah and Suvah) and the states (waking and the rest).

From these three letters, the exalted Lord Aja created the whole body of articulated sounds, defined as 'antas-tha', 'ūshma', 'swara', 'sparśa', 'dirgha' and so on; and out of these the exalted and omnipresent Lord, Who assumed the form of Brahmā, formed and gave out through His four mouths the four Vedas, along with the Vyāhrtis, and the (explicit) Omkāra, for the performance of their duties by the four classes of sacrificial priests (37-44).

And He taught the Vedas to His sons, the Brahmarshis, who were skilled in the proper recital of the Vedas. And they, the teachers of Dharma, imparted them to their sons. They were transmitted from generation to generation, in every four-yuga cycle, through the devoted disciples of each of them. They were divided at the end of Dvāpara by the great *rshis*. Seeing that, with the passage of time, men had become short-lived, weak and dull-witted, the Brahmarshis, prompted thereto by Achyuta seated in the heart, divided the Vedas. In the present Manvantara, too, O Brahman, the Omnipresent Lord and Creator of the worlds, was born into this world with a fraction¹ of His Power of Sattva, as the son of Parāśara by Satyavati, having been earnestly entreated in this behalf by Brahmā, Īśvara and other Guardians of the worlds for the safeguarding of Dharma. And he divided the Veda into four parts. Classifying the whole corpus of *mantras* into four classes, Ṛk, Atharva, Yajus and Sāman, according to subject, as gems are assorted from a mixed heap, he compiled the four *Samhitas* (collections). Summoning four pupils, the great-minded and omniscient teacher imparted one *Samhita* to each of them. To Paila he taught the first collection known as the Bahvr̥cha²; to Vaiśampāyana, the collection of Yajus called Nigada; to Jaimini the collection relating to Sāmans, called Chandoga; and to his pupil Sumantu the collection called Atharva-Angīras. The sage Paila imparted his collection to Indrapramiti

¹ The text has 'amśāmsa-kalayā'. S. explains 'amśa' as standing for Māyā; Sattva is an 'amśa' of 'Māyā'; of that Sattva was the sage Vyāsa born. ² 'Bahvr̥cha': 'comprising many ṛks'; 'Nigada': so called because the *Yajus mantras* are mostly in prose; 'Chandoga': being in metrical forms that lent themselves to singing.

and to Bāshkala. The latter, O son of the Bhrgus, dividing his collection into four parts, taught one each to Bodhya, Yājñavalkya, Parāśara and Agnimitra. And the self-disciplined Indrapramiti taught his collection to the sage and seer Māndukeya. The latter's disciple Devamitra taught it to Saubhari and others. Sākalya, his (Māndukeya's) son, dividing his collection into five parts, taught one each to Vātsya, Mudgala, Sāliya, Gokhalya and Sisira. Jātūkarnya, his (Sākalya's) disciple (dividing it into three parts) taught his collection, and a lexicon of Vedic words that he had prepared, to Bālāka, Paija, Vaitāla and Viraja respectively. Bāshkali extracted from all the various recensions the collection known as Vāḷakhilya, which he taught to Bālāyani, Bhajya and Kāsāra. These are the recensions of the Bahvrchas, which the above-mentioned Brahmarshis learnt by heart. The man who hears this account of the divisions of the metrical canon (the Ṛg-Veda) is freed from all sin (45-60).

Vaiśampāyana's disciples, the Charakas, became Adhvaryus; they were known as Charakas because they undertook the expiation, on behalf of their teacher, of the sin of Brahmana murder. His disciple Yājñavalkya said to him, 'Ah! revered sir, how much can these puny men do by way of penance? I shall perform that act of expiation, which is exceedingly difficult.' When he said this, his teacher was angry with him, and told him, 'Get thee gone. I have no use for a pupil like you who has such scant respect for Brahmanas. Give up instantly what you have learnt of me.' Thereupon the son of Devarāta spewed out of his mouth the collection of *yajus* and went his way. The sages saw that collection of *yajus* and, ardently desiring it, swallowed it, taking the form of partridges. And those *yajus mantras* became that exceedingly charming branch of the Yajur-Veda which is known as the *Taittirīya* (61-65).

Then Yājñavalkya, seeking to obtain hymns that his teacher did not possess, sang, O Brahman, the praises of the sun-god, the deity who is glorified by the Vedas. Yājñavalkya said: 'Om, Adoration to Thee, the exalted Lord Āditya, that singly sustainest life in all the worlds,

with their four categories of beings ranging from Brahmā to a clump of grass, by functioning as the *Ātman* within the heart, but no more obscured by the limiting adjuncts than space is, and by operating in the world as time, the aggregate of years made up of moments, split seconds and twinklings of the eye, and collecting the waters and discharging them year after year. O Chief of the gods, O Savitar, O Tapanā That destroyest all the sins and sorrows, and the nescience that is their seed, of Thy devotees, who extol Thee at the prescribed hour thrice a day as ordained by the Vedas, we contemplate Thee in yonder burning orb of Thine, exalted Lord. As the *Ātman*, the Inner Ruler, Thou activatest the material parts—the mind, the senses and the vital airs—of all beings, stationary and moving, in whom Thou dwellest. O supremely merciful Lord, seeing this world caught in the horrid mouth of the Rāhu known as darkness, and lying senseless as a corpse, Thou art moved by compassion to raise it by a mere look; and Thou promptest it to pursue the supreme good, the due discharge of one's own Dharma, by offering its prayers to Thee thrice a day. And Thou traversest the world, as rulers of men do, putting fear into the hearts of the wicked, and art received everywhere by the Guardians of the quarters with water libations from hands cupped like the lotus bud. Therefore I, who desire to acquire knowledge of the hymns that are unknown to others in their authentic form, offer worship, O Lord, to Thy lotus feet adored by the Lords of the three worlds' (66-72).

The Sūta said: Thus extolled and propitiated, the blessed Lord, the sun-god, taking the form of a horse, imparted to the sage knowledge of the Yajus hymns that were unknown to others. The all-knowing sage divided the numberless *yajus* hymns into fifteen recensions; and these recensions, known as the Vājasanis, were learnt by the Kāṇvas, the Mādhyandinas and others. Jaimini, the singer of the Sāman, had a son, the sage Sumantu, and he had a son Sunvān. To each of them he taught a different collection. And his great disciple Sukarmā made a thousand recensions of the Sāma hymns, collected from the mighty tree of the Sāma Veda. The Brahmana, Hiranyanābha of Kosala, and Paushyanji,

disciples of Sukarmā, learnt these collections, as well as another disciple of his, a native of Avanti, who was foremost among the knowers of the Brahma. Paushyanji, the native of Avanti, (and Hiraṇyanābha) Kausalya, had for their disciples five hundred Northerners, who were singers of the Sāman; these are also spoken of as Easterners. Paushyanji's disciples, Laugākshi, Māngali, Kulya, Kusida and Kukshi learnt a hundred collections each. Kṛta, another pupil of Hiraṇyanābha, taught twenty-four collections to his pupils; the remaining were taught to his pupils by the native of Avanti, who had realized the Self (73-80).

CHAPTER VII

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PURĀNAS

The Sūta said: Sumantu, learned in the Atharva Veda, taught his collection to his pupil. And he, dividing it into two parts, taught them to Pathya and Vedadarśa. Vedadarśa had for pupils Sauklāyani, Brahmabali, Modosha and Pippalāyani. And now let me tell you, O Brahman, of Pathya's pupils; they were Kumuda, Sunaka and Jājali, who was well-versed in the Atharva. Bābhru, the pupil of Sunaka of the Angirases, and another pupil, Saindhavāyana, learnt the two recensions; then (their pupils) Sāvarni and others. These, and the authors of manuals of worship of the stars, and of the rituals of propitiation, and other scions of the Kāśyapa and Āngirasa families were the propagators of the Atharva Veda. You shall, O sage, now hear who were the disseminators of the Purāṇas. Trayyārūṇi, Kāśyapa, Sāvarni, Akṛtavraṇa, Vaiśampāyana, and Hārīta were the six Paurāṇikas who learnt the collection directly from my father (Romaharshaṇa), the pupil of Vyāsa. I, as pupil of all the six, learnt all the collections. Kāśyapa, myself, Sāvarni and Akṛtavraṇa, the pupil of Rama, learnt the four original collections from the pupil of Vyāsa (1-7).

Listen, O Brahman, while I describe the characteristic features of the Purāṇas, which have already been defined by the Brahmarshis, according to my understanding of them, and following the Veda. *Sarga*,

Visarga, *Vṛtti*, *Rākshā*, *Antaras*, *Vamśa*, *Vamaśānu-charitām*, *Samsthā*, *Hetu*, and *Apāśraya*—these are the ten features¹ that, according to those well-versed in these matters, distinguish a Purāṇa. Others, O Brahman, speak of the Purāṇic features as five. The difference marks the distinction between the Mahāpurāṇas and the minor Purāṇas. The emergence, from the disturbance of the equilibrium of the *guṇas* in the Pradhāna, progressively through *Mahat* and the three-fold *āham-kāra*, of the subtle elements, the senses and the objects² thereof, is described as *Sarga*. The world of the stationary and the moving, perpetuating itself like seed from seed, which is the effect of the subliminal impressions left by past actions, and is evolved from these (*Mahat* and the rest) by the grace of the Puruṣha, is known as *Visarga*. Living creatures live on the inanimate (and on the animate too). Among these, the means of livelihood that men adopt by natural inclination, or by deliberate choice, or because it is ordained, is called *Vṛtti*. The pastimes with which Achyuta diverts Himself in His incarnations, *yuga* after *yuga*, among the lower creation, men, sages or gods, when He slays the enemies of the Vedas, are called *Rākshā* (the protection of the universe). That is a Manvantara, in which one particular set of powers—a Manu, gods, that Manu's sons, an Indra, *r̥shis*, and a partial incarnation of Hari—holds sway. The line of Kings born to Brahmā, which existed in the past, exists today and will exist in the future, is called *Vamśa*; the story of these Kings and of their most distinguished descendants is called *Vamśānu-charitām*. The seers speak of the four kinds of dissolution of the universe by the action of Māyā, known as Naimittika, Prākṛtika, Nitya and Ātyantika, as *Samsthā*. The *jīva* is called the *Hetu*, being the cause of the coming into existence of the universe; for he does *karmas* prompted by hisnescience; while some speak of him as the experiencer of the subliminal impressions that remain from past actions, others regard him as the 'unmanifest'. *Apāś-*

¹ These ten features are the same as those mentioned in the verses Bk. II x 3-7; only, some of them are differently named.
² 'indriyārthānām': is translated above as 'senses and their objects'; but S. takes 'artha' to stand for 'the gods'.

raya (the Refuge) is the Brahma, Which exists associated with the modes of the *jīva*, caused by *Māyā*, in the states of waking, dream and sleep, but Which also exists apart from them; being at once associated with, and separate from the body in its various states, from conception to death, even as a material substance is with objects made thereof, and as the one Being is with forms and names. When the mind (*chitta*) of its own accord ceases from assuming the three states, or is stilled by yoga, then he (the *jīva*) realizes the Ātman and gets out of the transmigratory cycle (8-21).

The sages who knew the past spoke of the Purāṇas, big and small, marked by these features, as being eighteen in number. The eighteen are the Brahma, Padma, Vishnu, Siva, Linga, Garuda, Nāradeeya, Bhāgavata, Agni, Skāndha, Bhavishya, Brahma-vaivarta, Mārkan-deya, Vāmana, Varāha, Matsya, Kūrma, and Brahm-mānda Purāṇas. I have now described, O Brahman, the division of the Veda by the sage and the teaching of its recensions to his disciples and by them to their disciples, and so on. By hearing this account one grows in Brāhmic lusture (22-25).

CHAPTER VIII

MARKANDEYA'S PENANCE

Saunakā said: 'O Sūta, good friend, may you live long. You must tell us about another thing, O best of speakers, for you can guide men out of the endless darkness (of *samsāra*) in which they wander helplessly. It is said that the long-lived sage, the son of Mrkandu, was the sole survivor in a dissolution that came at the end of a Kalpa and engulfed all the world. But he was born into our family in the present Kalpa; he was an ornament of the Bhṛgu clan. And up to date there has been no universal destruction (in the current Kalpa). It is said that, floundering all alone in the ocean, he beheld the Supreme Lord as a marvellous man-child lying on a banyan leaf all by Himself. This has raised great doubts in my mind, and an eagerness to know the truth. You should resolve it, you are a great yogi and an acknowledged authority on the Purāṇas' (1-5).

The Sūta answered : The question you have asked, great sage, is calculated to dispel the delusion in the minds of men, since, in answering it, I shall have to tell the story of Narayana, which wipes off the sins of Kali. Mārkandeya, receiving from his father in due order the sacraments of the twice-born, learnt the Vedas in accordance with the rules, and engaged in austerities and the recital of the Veda. Taking the vow of lifelong celibacy, he lived a peaceful life. He wore his hair matted, and was attired in tree-bark and the skin of the black antelope; equipped with staff and water-pot, and wearing the sacred thread and the grass girdle, he carried the rosary of beads and *kūśa* grass. To progress in Dharma, he worshipped Hari at dawn and dusk in the fire, in the sun, in the teacher, in the Brahmana and in himself. Silently placing before his Guru the food he begged morning and evening, he partook of it with his Guru's permission; sometimes he went without food, if permission was not given. Worshipping Hrishikesa thus for endless years, and devoting himself to austerities and the learning of the Vedas, he overcame death, which is not easily vanquished; whereat Brahmā, Bhṛgu, Bhava (Siva), Daksha and other sons of Brahmā, the worlds of men and gods, the manes, and all created things marvelled exceedingly. Thus the yogi, observing life-long celibacy, succeeded by the practice of austerities, the study of the Veda, and the exercise of self-control, in concentrating his mind on Adhokshaja by abstracting it from the outside world and freeing it from debilitating passions. As the yogi thus held his mind in prolonged contemplation, an immense period of time, covering six Māvantaras, passed (6-14).

Coming to know of this in the present Manvantara, the Destroyer-of-the-citadel (Indra) was alarmed by his austerities, and set about interposing obstacles. To distract the sage he sent Gandharvas and Apsarases, the god of love, spring and the breezes from the Malaya mountain, as well as cupidity (the dearly beloved offspring of *rajas*) and pride. And they, noble sir, went to his hermitage on the northern flank of the Himalaya, where runs the river Pushpabhadra, and wherein is the rock known as Chitrā. They entered those holy hermitage

grounds revered for their sacred trees and vines; filled with numerous households of Brahmanas of great sanctity and containing reservoirs of pellucid and purifying water; resounding with the hum of drunken bees, the song of the koel and the corybantic strutting of the peacock drunk with passion, and alive with multitudinous flocks of birds in heat. A breeze, laden with cool drops of spray from the cascades, and hugged by the flowers, began to blow, kindling thoughts of love. And it was the vernal season there, with the moon rising in the evening sky and numberless trees and creepers, which seemed to embrace each other with their boughs festooned with row upon row of bunched blooms. And there was seen, too, the god of love, leader of the company of Apsarases, carrying in his hands the strung bow and arrow, and attended by bands of singing and playing Gandharvas (15-22).

The servitors of Sakra beheld him (the sage) who having made oblations in the fire, was seated in *samādhi* with closed eyes, like the god of fire corporeally present. The women danced before him, and the singers sang and made delightful music with *mṛdanga*, *vīṇā* and *paṇava*. Then the god of love fitted the five-faced dart in his bow. Spring and longing, and the retainers of Indra strove their utmost to disturb his mind. As Punjikasthali, playing ball, her middle oppressed by the weight of her breasts, the chaplet slipping from her hair, her glances flitting hither and thither, darted after the ball, the breeze blew away her fine garment, her girdle having snapped. At that moment Love let fly his arrow, cocksure of victory. But it all failed with him, as do the endeavours of the powerless man. Trying to harm the sage, they were scorched by his splendour, and they beat a retreat, like children who had roused a snake, O sage. Though the retainers of Indra had thus made a determined assault on him, the sage was not in the least egotistical; this should not be a matter for surprise, O Brahman, where the great are concerned. The Lord Indra, when he saw the wan faces of the god of love and his retinue and heard of the dignity and poise displayed by the Brahmarshi, could only marvel (23-31).

While he was thus engaged in concentrating his mind

by the practice of austerities and self-control and the study of the Vedas, Hari, in the form of the twins Nara and Narayana, appeared before him to bless him. The two, one fair and the other dark in complexion, had eyes like the fresh-blown lotus. They had four arms, and were clad in deer skin and tree-bark. They wore rings of *kuśa* grass and the sacred thread of nine strands, and carried the water-pot and the straight bamboo staff, the rosary of lotus beads, the small fly-whisk, and a handful of *darbha* grass. They, the recipients of the homage of the great gods, looked like *tapas* incarnate, with their tall figures, ruddy as blazing lightning. On seeing the sages Nara and Narayana, who were the very embodiments of the exalted Lord, he sprang up from his seat and prostrated himself before them with infinite reverence, falling down on the ground like a stick. His body, mind and senses supremely content in the bliss of seeing them, his hair standing on end, his eyes brimming with tears, he could hardly look up at them. Getting up, he bowed to them with joined palms in all humility, and embracing them as it were with his eyes in an ecstasy of longing, welcomed the almighty lords in a faltering voice, saying, 'Salutations, and again salutations !' Placing seats for them and washing their feet, he worshipped them, proffering *arghya* and unguents, incense and flowers. When the sages, who were graciously inclined towards him, were comfortably seated, he again bowed down at their feet and addressed those two, who were supremely to be adored (32-39).

Mārkaṇḍeya said : ' How can I praise Thee, Omnipresent Lord, seeing that it is verily by Thy prompting that the breath stirs in the body, and along with it speech, mind and the senses, in all beings, including Aja and Sarva, and me too ? And yet Thou art the soul's kin of those that adore Thee. Thou hast assumed these forms, O Lord, to safeguard the welfare of the three worlds, to dispel sorrow and suffering, and to bring them victory over death, even as Thou hast taken many other different forms for the protection of the universe. And having created all this, Thou retractest it into Thyself again, like the spider. I worship those feet of Him Who protects and controls the worlds of the stationary

and the moving; by clinging to which a man may keep himself free from the taint of *karma*, *guṇa* and *kāla*, and which the sages who know the true inwardness of the Vedas, extol, prostrate themselves before, worship and meditate upon incessantly, solely with the desire to attain them. We know of no sanctuary, O Lord, other than those feet of Thine, That art liberation itself, for men who have cause for fear everywhere. Brahmā himself, who holds his office for two *parārdhas*, goes in dread of Thee That art Destroyer Time; what then shall we say of his creatures, who are of the earth earthy? I therefore yield myself to those feet—for in Thee is true wisdom, Thou art the Ruler of all hearts and the Transcendent Lord—turning my back on the body and its affiliates, which conceal the *Ātman* and are futile, perishable, a mere simulacrum, with no reality apart from the *Ātman*. He that worships Thee gets from Thee all that he can want. O Lord That art the soul's true kin, though all these forms, composed of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, which are responsible for the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, are of the stuff of Thy *Māyā* and are all assumed by Thee in play, it is the form which is compact of *sattva* that brings men freedom, not the others; from them come sorrow, delusion and fear. Therefore it is, O Lord, that the wise devote themselves in this life to the worship of that beloved form¹ of Thine, and those of Thy devotees, as constituted of pure *sattva*. The devotees look upon the *sāttvic* form alone as that of the Supreme Purusha, not the others, because it is that which confers on one the freedom of Vaikuntha, where fear is unknown and where there is the Bliss of the Self. I make my salutations to the exalted Lord, the Supreme Purusha, Who comprehends all that is, Who is the manifest universe and the Master thereof, the Supreme Deity; Who is, too, the sage Narayana, and the Perfect Man (Nara), the Immaculate One, Who is sparing of speech, and Who propagates the Vedic way. He² who, because his intellect was clouded by Thy *Māyā*, did not at first know Thee That wert present in his heart,

¹ 'that beloved form...': that is, the incarnation as Nārāyaṇa, and Nara who is spoken of here as representing all devotees. Though twins, they are spoken of as one. ² Brahmā.

his senses, and the world of objects, since his mind strayed through the opening of the crafty senses, came himself to have direct knowledge of Thee when he got from Thee, the Teacher of all the worlds, the Veda which Thou didst reveal. I make my salutations to the Mahāpurusha, Who may be realized through the Veda, which reveals the secret truth about Thee, the Ātman, while all the accomplished upholders of the different doctrines, Brahmā and the rest, are baffled by it, because Thou, Whose light is hidden behind the body, seemest to fit the thesis of every school' (40-49).

CHAPTER IX

A 'MĀYIC' PRALAYA

The Sūta said : Thus extolled by the wise Mārkanḍeya, the exalted Lord Narayana, the Companion of Nara, was pleased, and He answered him, the foremost of the Bhṛgu. The Lord said : 'O best of Brahmarshis, you have won perfection through your unfailing devotion to Me, the fruit of concentration achieved by the practice of austerities, the study of the Vedas, and self-control. We¹ are greatly pleased with you for your fidelity to the vow of lifelong celibacy. Ask for anything you like from One Who is first among the bestowers of boons.'

The sage told Him, 'Thou hast only demonstrated Thy supreme greatness, O Lord that reignest supreme over the great gods, O Achyuta that abolishest the sufferings of those that throw themselves at Thy feet. To have been granted a sight of Thee is boon enough for me, Thou, O Lord, seeing Whose gracious lotus feet with the eye of the mind, quickened by yoga, Aja and the rest consider themselves blest², hast revealed Thyself to my fleshly eye. But I should love to see, O Lord of the eyes like lotus petals, O Crest-jewel among those to praise whom purifies, that Māyā which makes all crea-

¹ The plural is used as He speaks on behalf of all the gods ; while, in the next sentence, the words 'from one who . . .' must be taken as referring to the speaker and His twin regarded as one. (S.).

² 'consider themselves blest'. The words must be understood to complete the sense, though there is nothing corresponding in the text.

tures, including the Guardians of the worlds, see diversity in the One Existent' (1-6).

The Sūta said : Thus praised, and gladly honoured by the sage, the Supreme Lord smiled, and saying, ' You shall have your wish ', departed for His hermitage at Badari. Thinking constantly on that, the sage lived in his hermitage. Meditating on Hari as present in the fire, the sun, the moon, water, the earth, the air, and *ākāśa*, and in himself, and in fact everywhere, he worshiped Him with offerings mentally made. Sometimes he was so deluged by the love that welled up in him that he forgot even worship. One evening, when the sage was engaged in his devotions on the bank of the Pushpabhadra, O foremost of the Bhṛgu, there rose a high wind. In the wake of that roaring wind came dreadful clouds with thunder and lightning. Everywhere the rain fell in torrents, the water coming down in spouts thick as axle-trees. Then the four oceans, with their fierce sea-monsters and their frightful whirlpools, were seen overflowing the land from all sides with a crashing din, the huge breakers driven by the raging wind. Seeing the earth deluged and the world with its four kinds of living beings oppressed within and without, like himself, by the waters that mounted to the skies, the fierce sun and the lightning, the sage was dismayed and terror-stricken. Even as he was looking, the ocean, terrible with its billows, its waters churned by the buffeting winds, and swollen by the pouring clouds, blotted out from view the earth with its island-continents and mountains. The three worlds and all the quarters were submerged along with all life on earth and in the upper air, the celestial regions and the whole world of the stars (7-15).

The great sage, the lone survivor, floundered like one who was stunned and blinded, his matted locks flung about. Consumed by hunger and thirst, plagued by sea-monsters, buffeted by fierce winds and waves, and overcome with weariness, he was engulfed by an impenetrable darkness and could not make out the directions, sky or earth. Now he would be sucked into a fierce whirlpool, then thrashed by the billows, anon bitten by sea-monsters that fought with each other over

him. Afflicted to boot by bodily ills, he knew grief, bewilderment, misery, happiness, fear and death. As he drifted in the flood, it seemed to him, who was confounded by Vishnu's Māyā, that millions and millions of years must have passed. Once, while he was thus floundering, the Brahmana saw, on an elevated spot on earth, a young banyan tree beautiful with fruits and shoots ; and he saw, too, lying in the fold of a leaf on a branch of the tree on its north-eastern side, an infant whose splendour swallowed up the darkness. The Brahmana marvelled to see him, dark-green as a great emerald, with his gracious lotus face, his conch-shaped neck and spacious chest, his shapely nose and beautiful eyebrows ; with the enchanting curls that swayed gently under his breath ; with the pomegranate flowers in his ears which charmed by their resemblance to the whorled chank ; with the nectar-sweet smile, tinted with rose by the splendour of the coral lips ; with the far corners of the eyes red like the inside of the lotus ; with the laughing look that warmed the heart ; with the belly shaped like the banyan leaf, and the deep navel whose folds quivered as his breath came and went. And as he looked, he lifted his lotus foot to his mouth with his dainty fingers, and sucked. His fatigue fell from him at that sight ; the lotus of his heart and his lotus eyes alike expanding with delight, and the hair on his body standing on end, he advanced towards the child, intending to question him ; though, looking at that wonderful figure, he had a shrewd suspicion (who it was). But before he could do that, the son of the Bhrgus was drawn into the body of the child with his inhaling breath, like a mosquito (16-27).

And there within he saw the world lodged in its entirety as it had existed before (the deluge), and the sight so astounded him that he fell into a stupor. He saw the sky, heaven and earth, the stars and the constellations, the mountains and the seas, the islands and the continents, the quarters, the gods and the Asuras, the forests, the different countries, the streams, the towns, the mines, the tillers' villages, the cowherd settlements, the different *varṇas* and *āśramas* and their occupations, the gross elements and their products, time, which consti-

tutes the different *yugas* and Kalpas, and whatever else comes into the field of practical activity—he saw in fact the entire universe displayed as if it were real. He saw the Himālaya and that river Pushpavahā and his own hermitage on its bank, with the sages in it. And as he was having this elaborate view of the universe, he was thrown out with the child's respiration and fell into the ocean of the Dissolution again. He saw the banyan on the same elevated spot of earth and, lying in the fold of the leaf, the child, who lovingly regarded him out of the corner of his eye, with a smile sweet as nectar (27-31).

On seeing the child, he darted forth in a fever of agitation to embrace Adhokshaja, who, entering through his eyes, was established in his heart. But before he could do that, the exalted Lord, the supreme Master of yoga, the Dweller in the heart, had vanished in an instant from the view of the sage, like the cherished desire of the luckless man. Thereupon the banyan tree, the water, the world deluge, all disappeared in a trice, and he found himself in his hermitage as before (32-34).

CHAPTER X

SANKARA'S BOON TO MĀRKANDEYA

The Sūta said: Having thus seen for himself the grandeur of His power of Māyā, displayed by Narayana, he sought refuge in Him alone. Mārkandeya said: 'I throw myself at Thy feet, which afford sanctuary to those who seek refuge with them. O Hari, Thy power of Māyā confounds even the learned and makes them imagine that they have found enlightenment' (1-2).

The Sūta said: Passing along the heavens on His bull with Rudrāṇī and His attendants, the exalted Lord Rudra saw him who had thus succeeded in stilling the mind. On seeing the sage, Umā said to Girīśa, 'Look at that Brahmana, O Lord, who has succeeded in stilling his body, mind and senses, like the water and the shoals of fish in a windless sea. Be pleased to manifest to him the fruit of his austerities, Thou art the bringer of fulfilment'. The Lord answered her, 'The Brahmarshi most certainly entertains no desires, not even for liberation. He has by his devotion attained supreme love for

the exalted Lord That dwells eternally in the heart. But let us hold converse with this saint, O Bhavāni. The supreme gain for men is association with the good' (3-7).

The Sūta said : Saying this, the exalted Lord, the Goal of the Good, Master of all lores, Controller of all hearts, approached him. But he, having stilled the mind, was not aware of the actual appearance before him of those two paramount Powers, Who are the Soul in all that lives, even as he was unaware of himself or of the universe. Knowing that, the exalted and supreme Lord Girīśa entered by His Power of Māyā the void in the heart, as air enters through a crevice. He (the sage) was vastly astonished to see Siva within himself, appearing there in a flash like the rising sun, with His matted locks, ruddy as lightning, three-eyed, ten-armed ; lofty in stature, and clad in tiger-skin, and carrying the rosary of beads, the little drum, the skull, the sword and the bow, along with the trident, the skull-topped club and the shield. Wondering, 'How is this? Whence comes this?', the sage emerged from *samādhi*. He opened his eyes and saw before him Rudra, sole Lord and mentor of all the three worlds, Who had come with Umā and His attendants ; and he bowed his head to the ground. Welcoming them, he placed seats for them, and worshipped them with the offering of water to wash and drink, scents, wreaths and incense and the waving of lights. And he said, 'What can we do for Thee, O Supreme Lord, That pervadest all that is and findest all satisfaction in Thy own puissance, seeing that it is Thou that bringest bliss to all the worlds? Adoration to Siva, the serene, Ruler of Sattva and Bestower of happiness. I make my salutations to Thee That art gentle and gracious while utilizing *rajas*, and can be terrible too, using *tamas*' (8-17).

The Sūta said : Thus extolled, the exalted Lord, the First of the Gods, the Goal of the good, was greatly pleased with him, and He graciously told him with a smile, 'Ask of us what you will. We are the Lords of boons, all three of us, a sight of whom never goes unrewarded ; it is from us that man obtains immortality (liberation). To those Brahmanas who walk in the ways

of the good and are at peace with themselves, who are free from attachments and have abounding love for all creatures, who have single-minded devotion to us, who entertain no animosity and who look upon all with an equal eye, to such Brahmanas all the worlds and their Rulers make their obeisance; they worship them and devote themselves to their service, even as I, the Lord Brahmā, and the Supreme Lord Hari Himself do. They see not an iota of difference between Me and Aja and Achyuta, nor between themselves and other men. That is why we are devoted to you. It is not as if sacred waters or images of the gods made of earth or stone do not purify; they do, but only when they are worshipped over long years; whereas you do at sight. We make our reverence to the Brahmanas who sustain in their hearts the Vedas, which are our form, by the exercise of concentration, reflection, study and self-control. Even great sinners and the lowest of the low will be purified merely by hearing of you or seeing you. What doubt then about that happening to those who hold converse with you?' (18-25).

The Sūta said: Drinking in with his ears, on which they fell like nectar, those words of Him Who has the moon for ornament, words which were pregnant with the profound truths of Dharma, the *rshi* felt he could never have enough of them. He who had been tossed about so long by Vishnu's Māyā and exhausted found his weariness dropping from him thanks to those nectar-sweet words of Siva, and he answered Him thus. The *rshi* said: 'Ah! the playful ways of the Lord are past understanding, seeing that the supreme masters of the world extol and offer their respects to the creatures whom they should order about. Perhaps the promulgators of Dharma practise it themselves, commend its practice, and praise it when it is well discharged, in order to make men do likewise. Thy greatness, O Lord, cannot be compromised by Thy employing Thy beguiling arts with this end in view, any more than the magician by his tricks. I offer my humble adoration to the exalted Lord Who, having created this universe by an act of will and entered it, appears, like the dreamer, to be the doer of actions which are really the work of the

gunas. Salutations to Him Who displays the three *gunas* and is their Controller, to Him Who is the Immaculate, the One without a second, the Supreme Teacher, the Begetter of the Veda. What other boon shall I ask of Thee, O Lord That art everywhere, which would be greater than Thee, to be vouchsafed a sight of Whom is more than all boons, since he who has seen Thee has obtained his heart's desire, and is filled with bliss everlasting? But still I would beg a boon of Thee that knowest no lack and grantest all wishes—that I may never be found failing in my devotion to the exalted Lord, to those who are devoted to Him, and likewise to Thee' (26-34).

The Sūta said: Worshipped and extolled by the sage in such pleasing words, the exalted Lord Śiva answered him thus, Sarvāṇi applauding: 'Because you are devoted to Adhokshaja, great sage, this wish of yours shall be fulfilled in its entirety and, besides, you shall enjoy by virtue of your Brāhmic lustre, as long as the present Kalpa lasts, renown for holiness, immunity from age and death, knowledge of past, present and future and the illumination that goes with non-attachment. And you shall be the teacher of the Purāṇa.' The Sūta went on: Having thus granted boons to the sage, the Supreme Lord of the three eyes departed, relating to the Goddess as He went his exploits and the unique experience that had befallen him in the past. And that distinguished son of the Bhṛgu, who attained celebrity as a *mahā-yogī*, and gave his exclusive devotion to Hari, is without a doubt still sojourning in this world (35-39).

I have now told you the story of that man of wisdom, Mārkandeya, and his experience of the marvellous puissance of the Lord's Māyā. Some, who do not know that the world's creation and dissolution is the work of the Lord's Māyā, speak of this experience of his, which was in fact special to him and unique, as having lasted for aeons of time, and having been repeated again and again. He who narrates, and he who listens to others' narrating this tale redolent of the glory of the Wielder of the Discus, are both released, blessed men, from the transmigratory life that is the result of the subliminal impressions of *karma*, O foremost of the Bhṛgu (40-42).

CHAPTER XI

WORSHIP OF THE LORD IN HIS SYMBOL

Saunaka said : ' O devotee of the Lord, we should be glad to be enlightened on one important matter by you, who are first among men of all-round learning and know the conclusion to which all the Tantras point. As we are anxious to learn the way of active devotion, by achieving perfection in which man attains immortality, please explain how those who follow the modes of worship prescribed in the Āgamas conceive of the Lord of Sri, Who is pure Consciousness, in concrete terms as having members, auxiliaries, weapons and ornaments, and with what metaphysical principles they identify these ' (1-3).

The Sūta said : Making my obeisance to My *gurus*, I shall speak of the manifestations of Vishnu which have been described in the Vedas and the Tantras by the teachers, the Lotus-born and others. The Viraj was created by the nine principles beginning with Māyā, out of the sixteen evolutes; when it is informed by consciousness, the three worlds are seen in it. This is spoken of as the body of the Vairāja (Cosmic Purusha). The earth is represented as the feet of the Lord, the heavens as the head, the sky as the navel, the sun as the eyes, the air as the nostrils and the quarters as the ears. The Prajāpati is conceived of as the genitals of the Supreme Lord, death as His anus, the Guardians of the worlds as His arms, the moon as His mind, Yama as His brows, bashfulness as His upper lip and covetousness as the lower. The moonlight is His teeth, and beguilement is His smile. The trees are the hair on the body of the Bhūmā, the clouds are the hair on the head of the Supreme Purusha. The body of the Mahāpurusha is of the same proportions with reference to His limbs, as is that of the ordinary man in regard to his (4-10).

It is the pure consciousness of the *jīva* that the Birthless wears as the jewel known as the Kausthubha, and its halo is the Srivatsa mark on the breast of the Omnipotent Lord. He wears His own Māyā, composed of divers *guṇas*, which is known as the garland of wild flowers. He is clad in the yellow silks which are the

Vedas, and wears the triform Praṇava as the sacred thread. The Lord has the Sāṅkhya and the Yoga for His *makara*-shaped ear-rings, and for His crown the Brahmaloṇa, that sanctuary where there is freedom from fear. The Pradhāna, wherein He has established Himself, is known as Ananta, and His seat, called the lotus, is the *sattva guṇa*, with which are found in association Dharma, Jñāna and the rest. He carries the mace, which is the principle of the vital breath, and with which go the vigour of the senses, mental power and bodily strength; the conch-shell, which is the water principle; the discus, which is the fire principle; the sword, bright as the sky, which is the *ākāśa* principle; the buckler, the *tamas* principle; the bow Sārṅga, which is time in tangible shape; and the quiver full of *karma*. The senses are spoken of as His arrows, the will to action as His chariot, and the subtle elements as the manifestation of that will. The *mudras* are indicative of special purposes. The place of worship of the Lord should be conceived of as the orb of the sun, the initiation by the Guru into the *mantra*, as constituting his competence for worship, and the adoration of the Lord, as the sure means of dispelling one's sins. The lotus that the Lord sports in His hand is the sixfold puissance signified by the word 'Bhaga'. The fan and the fly-whisk that are employed in the service of the Lord are Dharma and fame. The umbrella, O Brahman, is Vaikuntha, where there is absolute freedom from fear. The triad of Vedas is spoken of as the Suparṇa, who bears on his back the Puruṣa Who is Himself the *yajna* (sacrifice). The Great Goddess Śrī is the *Śakti* of Hari, invariable and inseparable from His essence. Viśhvaksena, Chief of the divine attendants, is, as is well known, the embodiment of the Āgamas. Nanda and the other warders at the gates of Vaikuntha are the eight supernatural powers, *Animā* and the rest (11-20).

It has been declared, O Brahman, that the Supreme Puruṣa (Narayana) Himself is to be worshipped in His four forms—as Vāsudeva, Sankarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. The exalted Lord is also to be conceived of as Viśva, Taijasa, Prājña, and Turiya in the different states characterized respectively by awareness of the

objective world, by the functioning of the mind alone, by residual impressions, and by pure consciousness. The exalted Lord Hari sustains the four states, through His four manifestations, each with its distinctive body, limbs, weapons and ornaments, while remaining supreme as the Inner Ruler of the *jīva* (21-23).

O best of Brahmanas, He, the Lord, the Source of the Veda, Self-luminous, filled with His own glory, creates, destroys and preserves the universe by His inherent power of *Māyā*, and is therefore spoken of by different names as if they referred to different Personalities, though nothing can detract from His omniscience. Those who are devoted to Him realize Him as their own soul. 'O Sri Krishna, Friend of Krishna, O Chief of the *Vṛshnis*, That burnt up the *Kshatriya* clans that plagued the earth, O Thou Whose power knows no wane, O Govinda, Whose sanctifying glory was sung by the bands of the *Gopis* and by Thy devoted servants, and merely to hear of Whom is to be blest, have Thy servants in Thy keeping': He who, getting up at dawn, diligently recites this verse that sets out the attributes of the *Mahāpurusha*, with his mind fixed on Him, sees the *Brahma* ensconced in the cave of the heart (24-26).

Saunaka said: 'You may remember that the blessed Suka told *Vishnurāta*, in reply to his question, of the group of seven, connected with the sun, which varies from month to month. Be pleased to tell us, who shall listen attentively, their names and functions, and those of their rulers, and also of the different aspects in which Hari, Who activates the sun, appears in these various groups' (27-28).

The *Sūta* answered: This sun (that we see), created by the *Māyā* of Vishnu, the *Ātman* in all creatures, for furthering the world's work, is constantly revolving round the worlds. The sun, who is in fact none but Hari Himself, the Creator and Soul in all creatures, is only one; but being indispensable for all *kārmās* enjoined by the Vedas, he is spoken of by the *ṛshis* variously in that context. By the operation of *Māyā* Hari is seen, O Brahman, in nine different forms (in the context of the performance of *karmās*)—as time, place, action, agent, instrument, effect, *sāstra* (*mantras*), material and fruit.

In each of the twelve months beginning with Chaitra, the exalted Lord, manifesting Himself as time, traverses the worlds, sustaining life. He is accompanied by a different group each month. The month of Chaitra is ushered in by Dhātā,¹ Kritasthali, Hethi, Vāsuki, Rathakṛt, Pulasthya and Tumburu. Aryamā, Pulaha, Athaujāh, Praheti, Punjikasthali, Narada, and Kachchanīra usher in the month of Mādhava. Mitra, Atri, Paurusheya, Takshaka, Menakā, Haha and Rathasvana usher in the month of Jyeshtha. Vasishta, Varuṇa, Rambhā, Sahajanya, Huhū, Sukra and Chitrasvana, usher in the month of Āshādha. Indra, Viśvāvasu, Srotā, Elāpatra, Āngiras, Pramlochā and Varya (the Rākshasa) usher in the month of Srāvaṇ. Vivasvān, Ugrasēna, Vyāghra, Āsāraṇa, Bhṛgu, Anumlochā and Sankhapāla usher in the month of Bhādrapada. Pūshā, Dhananjaya, Vāta, Sushēṇa, Suruchi, Ghṛtāchī and Gautama usher in the month of Māgha. Kratu, Varchā, Bharadwāja, Parjanya, Senajit, Viśva and Airāvata usher in the month of Phālguna. Amsu², Kaśyapa, Tārکشya, Ṛtasena, Ūrvaśi, Vidyucchatru and Mahāsankha usher in the month of Mārgaśirsha. Bhaga, Sphoorja, Arishtanemi, Ūrṇa, Āyu, Karkotaka and Poorvachitti usher in Pushya. Tvashtā, the son of Rchika (Jamadagni), Kambala, Tilotamā, Brahmāpeta, Śatajit, Dhṛtarāshtra, are those who usher in the month of Āsvina. Vishnu, Asvatara, Rambhā, Sūryavarchas, Satyajit, Visvāmitra and Mahāpeta usher in the month of Kārtika (29-44).

These are the glorious powers of Vishnu functioning as Āditya, by remembering whom at dawn and dusk every day men may rid themselves of all sins. In all the twelve months, the sun-god, going over the world of men in the company of these six (attendants), prompts their intelligence for their good here and hereafter. The sages extol him by reciting the Sāma, Rk. and Yajus *mantras* that proclaim his glory; the Gandharvas sing his praises, and the Apsarases dance before him. The serpents bind the wheels of his chariot firmly, the

¹ These are respectively the sun of the month, and the Apsaras, the Rakshasa, the serpent, the Yaksha, the *Rishi* and the Gandharva that attend on the sun. But this enumeration is not given in that order in regard to the other months. ² (*alt.*) Amśa.

Yakshas harness the horses to it, and the strong Rākshasas push it from behind. Sixty thousand Vālakhilyas¹, immaculate Brahmarshis, walk in front, facing Him, and extol the Omnipresent Lord with hymns. In Kalpa after Kalpa, the Supreme Lord, Hari, the Birthless, Who knows neither beginning nor end, protects the worlds, taking these many forms (45-50).

CHAPTER XII RECAPITULATION

The Sūta said: Glory to the Supreme Dharma! Glory to Krishna, the Omnipotent Dispenser of all destinies! Making my obeisance to Brahmanas, I shall now briefly recapitulate the primordial *dharma*s. I have recounted to you, O Brahmanas, the marvellous story of Vishnu, since you asked me what it was that was most meet for men's ears. In this Purāṇa is described Hari Himself, the Dispeller of all sins, Narayana, the Controller of the senses, the Possessor of the six attributes of Omnipotence, the Lord God of the devotees. Here one may hear of the Supreme Brahma That baffles definition, the origin and end of the universe, and here are set forth the knowledge that leads to illumination as well as the means of obtaining it. Here are described the way of devotion and the aversion for the world that it brings about (1-5).

Here are to be found the story of Parikshit and that of Nārada; the embarking on a fast unto death of Parikshit, the sage-king, as the sequel to the Brahmana's curse and the conversation between Suka, the great Brahmana, and Parikshit. His departing this life in the act of deep meditation in yoga is then described, and the conversation between Nārada and the Unborn (Brahmā). Then follow accounts of the Divine incarnations, and the story of the creation of the Viraj by the Pradhāna through the various stages; the conversation between Vidura and Uddhava, and between Kshattā and Maitreya; the topic of the Purāṇa collections, and the description of the quiescence of the Mahāpurusha

¹ While His other attendants change from month to month, it is the same band of Vālakhilyas who hymn the sun-god every month.

during the Great Deluge ; then the re-starting of the process of creation by Prakṛti, the emergence of the seven evolving principles and their evolutes, the creation of the cosmic egg and the appearance of the Virāt Puruṣa in it ; the nature of time in its gross and subtle forms, the origin of the world-lotus, and the slaying of Hiraṇyākṣha in order to redeem the earth from the ocean ; the creation of the upper, middle and lower worlds, of Rudra, and of the androgynous being from whom issued Svāyambhuva Manu and Sataroopā, the prototype of all women, and the best ; the progeny of Kardama Prajāpati and his wife ; the incarnation of the exalted Lord as the great-souled Kapila, and the conversation of Devahūti with the wise Kapila. Then are described the progeny of the nine Brahmanas (Marichi and the rest) and the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifices, followed by the stories of Dhruva and Pṛthu, and the conversation between Prācīnabarhiṣ and Nārada. Then come, O Brahmanas, the story of Priyavrata and the doings of Nābhi, Rṣhabha and Bharata ; brief descriptions of the island continents, and the oceans, followed by an account of the mountains and the rivers ; the appearance of the zodiac and the position of the nether worlds and of hell. Then come the story of the birth of Dakṣa as the son of the Prachetases, of the progeny of his daughters, from whom were descended gods, Asuras, men, the lower creatures, serpents, birds and so on, and of the birth and death of the son of Tvastā. Then are narrated, O Brahmanas, the story of the birth and death of the sons of Diti, and the life and doings of the great-souled Prahrāda, sovereign of the Daityas ; followed by accounts of the Manvantaras, the rescuing of the great elephant, and the incarnation of Viṣṇu in the different Manvantaras as Hayagrīva, and so on ; and the incarnations of the Lord of the universe as a tortoise, as Dhanvantari, as a fish and as a dwarf ; and the story of the churning of the milky ocean, for the sake of nectar, by the celestials, and the great war between the gods and the Asuras. Then come the accounts of the royal dynasties ; the birth of Ikṣhvāku and the story of his line, and of the great-souled Sudyumna. And then are related the story of Ilā as well as that of Tārā ; the history of the Solar Race, and of the kings

beginning with Saśāda and including Nṛga ; the stories of Sukanyā and Saryāti, of the sagacious Kakutstha, Khatvāṅga and Māndhatā, Saubhari and Sagara. Then are related the story of Rama, Kōsala's King, which destroys sins, the discarding by Nimi of his body, and the origin of the Janakas ; the extirpation of the Kshattriyas by Rama, foremost of the Bhṛguś ; the story of Aila, the founder of the Lunar Race, of Yayāti and Nahusha, of Bharata, the son of Dushyanta, of Santanu and his son (Bhīshma). Then is told the story of the line of Yadu, eldest son of Yayāti, in which the Lord of the universe was incarnate under the name of Krishna ; His birth in Vasudeva's house and His upbringing in Gōkula (6-27).

Here are told at length the infinite exploits of the Foe of the Asuras—the drinking of the milk of Pūtānā's breast along with her life, the upsetting of the cart by the infant, the destruction of Trṇāvarta (the demon whirlwind), and of the demons in the guise of a crane and a calf ; the slaying of Dhenuka and his companions, and of Pralamba ; the rescue of the Gopas from the enveloping forest fire ; the subduing of the serpent Kālīyā ; and the rescue of Nanda from the great python. Then are recounted the story of the observance of vows by the maids, wherewith Achyuta was pleased ; the shedding of His grace on the wives of the sacrificers and the repentance of the Brahmanas ; the lifting up of the Govardhana mountain ; the worship of Krishna by Sakra, and His anointing by Surabhi ; His frolic with the women in the nights (that followed) ; the slaying of Sankachūda, of Arishta and Keśi ; the coming of Akūrā, the departure of Rama and Krishna (to Mathurā) and the lament of the women of Vraja ; Krishna's first sight of Mathurā ; the slaying of the elephant, of Mushtika and Chāṇōora, of Kamsa and others ; and the recovery of the dead child of (their) Guru Sāndipani (28-35).

Then are described the doings of Hari while He lived at Mathurā, in association with Uddhava and Rama, which brought happiness to the circle of the Yadus, O Brahmanas ; the destruction of army after army which Jarāsandha put in the field ; the killing of the King of the Yavanas and the founding of Kuśasthali ; the bringing

of the Pārijāta tree and of Sudharmā from the celestial world ; the carrying off of Rukmiṇi by Hari, putting down the enemy by main force ; the immobilising of Hara by making Him yawn in battle and the lopping off of Bāṇa's arms ; the rescue of the maidens after slaying the King of Prāgjyotiṣha ; the might and valour, and the story of the slaying of Chaidya, Paundraka, Sālva and the wicked Dantavakra, of Sambara, Dvivida, Peetha, Mura, the Panchajanas and others, and the burning of Vārāṇasi ; the removal of the burden of the earth, making the Pāṇdavas the instruments thereof. Then are related the destruction of His own clan, the curse of the Brahmanas serving as ostensible cause ; the marvellous discourse of Vāsudeva for Uddhava's benefit, in the course of which He expounded the whole Science of the Self and clearly enunciated the tenets of *Varnāśramadharma*s. And that is followed by the account of the disappearance of His mortal vesture effected by His yogic power (35-42).

Then follow descriptions of the characteristics of the *yugas*, the occupations followed by men, the degeneration of man in Kali, the four kinds of dissolution and the three types of creation ; the story of the discarding of his body by the royal sage, the wise Viṣṇurāta ; the account of the division of the Vedas by the sage (Vyāsa), and the story of Mārkaṇḍeya, which purifies the hearer, and the descriptions of the Mahāpuruṣa and of the sun, the soul of the universe. I have thus recounted all that you desired to hear from me, O great Brahmanas. In this discourse the Lord's playful incarnations and exploits have been exhaustively dealt with. Even the man who involuntarily utters the words, 'Glory to Hari !' when falling down, or slipping, when suffering pain or sneezing, is freed from all sins, however heinous. The Lord Ananta, whenever any one sings His praises or listens avidly to the tale of His greatness, enters his heart and expels all sorrows, as the sun disperses darkness, or a great wind the clouds. Those are lying words and evil, and tell of evil things, that do not speak of the exalted Lord Adhokṣaja. Those alone are true that extol the glory of the illustrious Lord and—ah !—how auspicious and purifying they are ; for they awaken the mind

to the glorious attributes of the Lord. They charm the mind and are sweet with an ever-fresh sweetness ; they sustain the spirits in a festive mood ; they quench the ocean of grief in which men are plunged. That discourse, however splendidly phrased, which does not take for its theme the glory of Hari which sanctifies the world, is the place that crowds delight in, not the sacred resort of the swans ; for where Achyuta is, there are saintly and pure hearts. That utterance alone can wash off the sins of humanity which, though every verse in it be faulty, contains the names of Ananta, which proclaim His glory, since the saintly hear them chanted, themselves sing them to others, or recite them for their own satisfaction. Even that knowledge which, by negating the limiting adjuncts, should reveal the Brahma, does not suffice if it is not informed by devotion to Achyuta ; how much less should *karma*, even the highest, if it is not dedicated to the Lord ? For it can bring only sorrow from beginning to end. The infinite labour and trouble involved in the observance of the *Varnāśrama-dharmas*, the practice of austerities and the study of the Vedas, bring their reward in prosperity and fame ; while the recital of the glorious attributes of Hari and the hearing of their praises ensure that one never grows forgetful of the lotus feet of Śrīdhara. And remembrance of the lotus feet of Krishna destroys all sins and brings peace ; it purifies the heart, engenders devotion to the Paramātmān and produces the knowledge that promotes distaste for the world and brings illumination. Great indeed is your merit, O worthy Brahmanas, in that you have lodged in your hearts and are always worshipping with unabated love Narayana, the Soul of the universe, the Almighty and Supreme Lord Who knows no superior. And you have been the cause of my recalling the teaching regarding the Ātman that I heard in days past in the company of many great souls, straight from the lips of the great sage at the assembly of the sages where King Parīkshit was embarked on his fast unto death (43-56).

I have placed before you, O Brahmanas, this account of the glory of Vāsudeva Whose mighty exploits are worthy of all praise ; it has the power to destroy all sins. He who recites to others or himself hears it read every

day, may be for an hour, may be for a minute, but with earnestness and a mind totally abstracted from all else, purifies his very soul. The man who hears it on the twelfth or thirteenth day of the lunar fortnight is long-lived. He who devoutly reads it before taking food is freed from great sins. The man who fasts and reads this Samhita with undivided attention at Pushkara, Mathurā or Dvāravatī, is delivered from the great fear (*samsāra*). The man who hears it recited, or himself recites it gains from the gods, the sages, the Siddhas, the manes, and the kings mentioned in it all that he desires. The Brahmana who with a collected mind reads this Samhita obtains the Madhukulyā, Ghṛtakulyā and Ṛshikulyā, which are to be won by learning in the prescribed way the Ṛk, Yajus and Sāma hymns; he gains, besides, the supreme goal that the Lord has promised (57-62).

The Brahmana who learns this gains wisdom, the Kshattriya lordship over the sea-girt earth, the Vaiśya possession of exhaustless treasure, and the Sūdra freedom from sin. Nowhere else is Hari, the Supreme Lord of all, and Destroyer of the whole body of sins of the Kali Age, spoken of so constantly as in this (Purāṇa), every word of which exalts the Lord, Who stands forth as all that is, by bringing Him into the discourse, whatever it might be about (63-65).

I make my salutations to Achyuta the Birthless, the Infinite, the Reality that is the Ātman, to Whom belongs the powers (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) that are responsible for the creation, the preservation and the destruction of the universe, Whom even the gods including Aja, Sakra, and Sankara, do not know how to praise. I offer my adoration to the God of Gods, the exalted and everlasting Lord Who is grounded in pure Consciousness and makes His abode in all creatures, stationary and moving, manifested in Himself by His nine powers in their active state. I offer my obeisance to the son of Vyāsa who, though his heart was so full of the joy of the Self that it expelled all other loves, was so overcome by the contemplation of the entrancing pastimes of the Invincible, that he, out of his abounding compassion, narrated

this Purāṇa, which illumines the Truth of truths and destroys all sins (66-68).

CHAPTER XIII

THE GREATNESS OF THE BHĀGAVATAM

The Sūta said : I offer my adoration to that Deity Whom Brahmā, Varuṇa, Indra, Rudra and the gods extol with divine hymns, and with the chanting of the Vedas, with the ancillary lores and the Upanishads, in the different styles, *krama*, *pada* and so on ; Whom the singers of the Sāman glorify, and the yogis see with minds stilled in contemplation and centred upon Him ; but Whose greatness not one of the gods or the Asuras can comprehend. May you be preserved by the breath of the exalted Lord, incarnate as the tortoise, which was exhaled when He was lulled to sleep by the scratching of the jagged rocks of the Mandara mountain, with its colossal weight, as it revolved on His back—that breath, a slight impulse from which set the ocean's waters vigilantly moving to and fro in the semblance of tides, a motion that shows no sign of stopping yet (1-2).

And now let me tell you of the various Purāṇas, the number of verses in each, and their total, the subject of this (Bhāgavata) Purāṇa, and the benefits that accrue from it, the practice of giving copies of it as gifts, and the special merit attaching to such gifts and to the recital of the Purāṇa. The *Brahma* Purāṇa contains ten thousand verses, the *Padma* fifty-five thousand, the *Srī Vaishnava* twenty-three thousand, the *Saiva* twenty-four thousand, the *Srī Bhāgavatam* eighteen thousand, the *Nārada* twenty-five thousand, the *Mārkaṇdeya* nine thousand, the *Agni* fifteen thousand four hundred, the *Bhavishya* fourteen thousand five hundred, the *Brahmavaivarta* eighteen thousand, the *Linga* eleven thousand, the *Varāha* twenty-four thousand, the *Skānda* eighty-one thousand one hundred, the *Vāmana* ten thousand, the *Kūrma* seventeen thousand, the *Matsya* fourteen thousand, the *Garuda* nineteen thousand and the *Brahmānda* twelve thousand ; the entire Purāṇa corpus totalling four hundred thousand verses (3-8).

Among the Purāṇas, *Srī Bhāgavatam* has eighteen thousand verses, as is well-known. This Purāṇa was originally revealed by the exalted Lord out of compassion to Brahmā, seated in His lotus-navel, who was terrified of the transmigratory life. In it are to be found, at the beginning, in the middle and in the end, stories calculated to induce disillusionment with the world. It brings bliss to gods and good men with its nectar-sweet collection of tales telling of the pastimes of Hari. Its subject, the essence of the Vedānta, is Reality, the One without a second, in which the Brahma and Ātman are one. And its object is emancipation. He who gifts the *Bhāgavatam*, placed on a golden throne, on the full-moon day in the month of Bhādrapada, reaches the supreme goal. Other Purāṇas shine, where the good are forgathered, only so long as the greatest of them all, the *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is not seen. For *Srī Bhāgavatam* is regarded as the essence of all Vedānta. He who has found supreme satisfaction, tasting its nectar-sweetness, can never delight in anything else. This is to the other Purāṇas what the Gangā is to other rivers, Achyuta to other gods, and Sambhu to other devotees of Vishnu. As Kāśī is unequalled among places of pilgrimage, so is *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam* among the whole collection of Purāṇas, O Brahmanas (9-17).

Srīmad-Bhāgavatam, the flawless Purāṇa, dear to the hearts of the devotees of Vishnu, celebrates that Consciousness, One and Pure, Which is the goal of the Paramahamsas ; it describes the cessation from *karma* that goes with knowledge, distaste for the world, and devotion. The man who hears it read or reads it with devotion and discrimination finds release. Let us meditate on that Reality, pure and luminous, untouched by grief or mortality, which in the far past lit for Brahmā this great lamp of Knowledge and then passed it on successively, as Brahmā to the sage Nārada, as Nārada to the sage Krishna Dvaipāyana, as Krishna to the prince of yogis, Suka, and again, as Suka to him who was protected by the Lord (Parikshit), because of His gracious compassion. Glory to the exalted Lord Vāsudeva, the Eternal Witness, Who graciously imparted this to Brahmā who longed for release. I make my salutations to the master-

yogi Suka, the incarnate Brahma, who brought release to Viṣṇurāta bitten by that serpent, the transmigratory life. Ordain it so, O Ruler of the gods, that in birth after birth devotion to Thy lotus feet may spring in our hearts; for Thou art our sole Protector, O Lord. I offer my adoration to Hari, the Supreme, the recital of Whose names destroys all sins, and humble submission to Whom brings surcease of sorrow.

(Here ends *Book Twelve* of *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam*.)

(Here ends *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam*)

NOTES

BOOK VIII

CH. I. P. 2 (10) S's *alt.* for 'therefore enjoy' is 'enjoy what is given thee, after dedicating it to Him'; his *alt.* for 'do not covet' is 'who else but He is the possessor of wealth.'

(18) Yāmas': R. describes them as 'gods born at the same time as His sons'.

CH. II. P.4(2) R. & M. omit 'sky'.

CH. III. P.8 (16 to 18) In these verses M. omits all but the first half of 16 and the second half of 18. 'whose . . . disturbed': M. 'whose mind is unaffected, and unchanged even when the *gunas* are active'.

CH. IV. P. 11 (8) 'hermitage . . . Malaya': The text has 'kulāchala' (boundary-mountain), which all commentators take as referring to the Malaya mountain.

CH. V. P. 15 (28) 'fifteen . . . fellies': The spokes are the ten organs and the five 'Prānas', the naves are the *gunas*; the fellies are the five gross elements, the mind, the *buddhi* and the ego.

(29) 'who . . . companion': S. (*alt.*) 'Who rides on Garuda and protects His devotee'.

P. 16(34) 'the moon . . . creatures': R. & M. (*alt.*) suggest that the properties attributed to the moon may also be read as applying to the Lord.

(39) 'intellect': R. 'joy'. 'of the spaces . . .': M. 'of the seven organs'.

CH. VIII. (5) The M. version omits this verse.

CH. XI. P. 38 (4) 'as a cheat . . . possessions'; M. 'as a cheat by his magic tricks makes children close their eyes and hides the sky from view and walks off with their goods'.

CH. XII. P. 41 (5) The M. version omits this verse.

P. 42 (9) S. & R. The different schools referred to are the Vedāntins, the Mīmāṃsakas, the Sāṅkhyas, the Pāṇcharātras and the yogis. The 'nine powers' posited by the Pāṇcharātras are known as Vimalā, Utkarshini, Jñāna, Kriyā, Yoga, Prahvi, Satyā, Isānā, and Anugrahā. M. describes the five schools as the Vedāntins, the Smārtas,, the Paurāṇikas, the Pāṇcharātras and the Ekantins.

P. 44 (38) 're-established . . . nature': M. 're-established in the state of sincere devotion'.

'Though . . . Māyā: 'In the form of a woman', says the text, 'and exercised by me at will'. *Vams.* refers to a reading which would mean 'you were *not* deluded by my Māyā'. R. takes 'dishtyā' to suggest that it was by Vishnu's Grace that even Śiva recovered His poise.

CH. XVI, P. 52 (4) 'that no evil . . . death': M. 'that no evil has befallen . . . through the agency of death who acts at his will'.

7. 'jackals' lairs': M. (*v.r.*) 'burning grounds'.

(14) 'But . . . devotees': M. takes this to mean, 'Now the Lord is favourable to the Asuras'.

CH. XVIII. p. 59 (1) 'Who . . . birth': (*lit.*) Who is free from birth and death; R. 'Who grants moksha' or 'Who is free from the birth and death brought about by past *karma*'; M. 'Vishnu, the Resort of the liberated'.

CH. XIX. P. 63 (6) 'even then . . . victory': (*lit.*) 'did not regard Himself as the victor'; R. 'It was with great difficulty that He

vanquished him and considered Himself victor; so, you must know that Hiraṇyākṣha's valour was limitless'.

P. 65 (35) 'permanent . . hell': *M.* (*v.r.*) 'You will live in grief till you discharge your promise'.

CH. XXIV. P. 79 (8) 'who was nearby': *M.* 'who was at a distance'.

P. 80 (30) 'As putting . . would be': *S.* (*alt.*) 'As devotion to those possessed of limited powers by men who mistake the body for the soul is not fruitless'.

P. 8 (36) 'with . . serpent': *M.* 'with a rope'.

P. 82 (48) 'silver': *M.* 'gold'.

BOOK IX

CH. I. P. 85 (25) 'The . . Meru': *M.* (*v.r.*) 'He entered a wood called Sukumāra-vanam'.

CH. II. P. 88 (15) *M.*, taking 'Kavi' to mean 'man of wisdom', treats this verse as dealing with Pṛshadhra himself.

(17.) 'who . . Brahmanhood': *R.* 'who, by worshipping the Brahma, attained Him, all their sins having been destroyed, and the eight qualities associated with the Lord developed in them'. For latter half of this verse, *M.* has (*v.r.*) which means that "Nabha, the son of Manu, had a son Svātīmula, whose son was Vasu".

P. 89 (32) With (*v.r.*) *R.* and others render the verse as meaning 'Kubera got from his father the Great Lore (the art of making oneself invisible or Brahmagyā)'. *M.* with another (*v.r.*) renders it as 'Giving to her father Tṛṇabindu the art of making oneself invisible, he married Idavidā and begot Kubera'.

CH. IV. P. 91 (10) After this *R.* has an extra verse, which means, 'Therefore one should not tell lies or covet others' goods. I am pleased with the truth-speaker, who becomes dear to Me'.

CH. VI. P. 102 (10) *R.* 'Ikṣhvāku, performing *tapas* and exchanging thoughts with his preceptor on the glories of God, was freed from attachments'. *M.* 'Ikṣhvāku had philosophic discussions with a Brahmana called Jāpaka. . . .'

P. 104 (50) 'look . . accumulated': *R.* 'look at my complete forgetfulness of the Brahma that I had long meditated upon'.

CH. VII. P. 107 (25) 'Merging . . earth': 'Samsāra is the product of the mind, and the mind is the product of food, and food stands for the earth' (*S.*).

'ahamkāra . . Ātman' *R.* 'and that *ahamkāra* in the Pradhāna which pervades Mahat, . . he meditated on the individual soul housed in Pradhāna, as enlightened by meditation and thus freed from ignorance'. *M.* points out that enlightenment comes from freeing the *jīva* from the hold of the material *buddhi*, which is his rendering of 'jñāna-kalā'.

CH. VIII. P. 109 (22) *R.* (*v.r.*) 'Even men endowed with direct experience or discursive knowledge do not know Thee'.

CH. IX. P. 114 (44) 'did . . boon': *M.* (*v.r.*) 'I do not opt for any *karma*, even as a means to *moksha*'.

(49) 'though It seems so': 'Because it transcends thought and word alike'; *N.* 'Who is established (in the act of worship) in the heart

emptied of loves and hates'.

'as . . . Vasudeva': *R.* and others render 'as Bhagavān and as Vāsudva'.

CH. X. P. 115 (12) 'Having cremated .': This verse is not to be found in the *M.* version.

CH. XI. P. 121 (12) *M.* reads 'Chakraketu' for 'Chitraketu'.

(16) 'On hearing . . qualities'; This verse is not to be found in the *M.* version.

P. 122 (19) 'tender . . forest': *M.* (*v.r.*) 'that shone like the lotus waked by the sun's rays'.

CH. XIV, P. 127 (6) 'took up the cause of his Guru's son': *S.* explains that 'it is well known that Hara obtained *Vidya* from Angiras (father of Bṛhaspati)'. All other commentators give the same explanation. *Vams.* gives two stories (citing *Brahma Vaivarta P.* in support) neither of which seems plausible, especially if we go by the opinion of modern scholars that the *B.V.P.* is later than the *Bh.P.* (12) *R.* and *M.* refer to an extra half-verse in some mss. which means 'But I shall not burn you to ashes, you who try to hide your wickedness'.

P. 129 (35) 'This beautiful body'; (*v.r.*) 'The soul that this body houses will fall a prey to the greedy senses'. *M.* considers this reading nearer to the wording of the original *Rk.*

CH. XIX. P. 143 (20) 'or heard': i.e. 'pleasures to be enjoyed in heaven' (spoken of in the Vedas).

CH. XX. P. 146 (28) 'rite called Mashṇāra'; *S.* says some other commentators regard the word as referring to a place of pilgrimage. Pp. 46-7 (31) This verse has quite a number of variant readings.

CH. XXIII. P. 156 (35) 'to be his (unwedded) wife': *Vams.* 'Who belonged to the Bhoja family'; *M.* 'who was found in the battle-field, separated from her kin'.

BOOK X (Pt. I)

CH. I. P. 162 (2) '*amśa*': *R.* 'along with Balarama'; *J.* & *N.* take it as qualifying *samsa*, meaning, 'relate at least a fraction of the glorious tale'.

(3) 'Who creates all beings': *R.* & *J.* 'Who protects the world and is the Inner Controller'; *M.* '*Viśvātma*'—'He Who pervades the world'.

(4) 'butcher of beasts': *S.* (*v.r.*) 'a man who destroys his own soul'. *R.* 'one who is ungrateful to the Lord for His favours'; *M.* (*v.r.*) 'an exceptionally stupid man'.

(6) 'me yah' is taken by *M.* as one word ('appeared before my eyes').

(7) *D.* '*mṛtyum*': 'intense grief in this life, and in hell after pralaya'. '*anāmayam*': 'happiness, being freed from woes of *samsāra*'. *R.* '*purusha-kāla-rupaiḥ*': the plural is used to denote the multiplicity of *Kshetrajñas* and of the units of time (from a second to a year). The suggestion is that the Lord as the Cause of the world must be meditated upon'. *N.* '*purusha-rupaiḥ*': 'In the person of those who give *upadeśa*'.

(9) The Chaitanya school hold that Nanda was the '*mukhya-pitā*', of the Lord, Vasudeva being only the physical cause.

P. 163 (16) 'that laves His feet': *M.* & *J.* 'The water that washes the holy *sālagrāma* in worship'.

P. 164 (22) According to the Chaitanya school, Krishna is ever present in Vṛndavana and other sacred places. His '*avatara*' means merely His making Himself visible to ordinary eyes. Only His divine attendants descend from Vaikuntha when such manifestation takes place, to do Him service.

(23) After this *R.* gives an extra verse meaning, 'Let the sages also take birth as cows, to propitiate Vishnu with their milk'.

(24) 'the *amsa* of Vāsudeva': *M.* takes 'Vāsudeva-kalā-nantah as one word meaning, 'Śeṣha, who is a part of Vāsudeva, being His white hair'.

'the Self-luminous': *V.* 'He who is not bound by *karma*'; *M.* 'He who shines by Hari's presence'.

(25) 'Vishnu's *Māyā*': *M.* reads 'Yoga-Māyā'; *J.* (and the Chaitanya school) distinguish between 'Antaranga-Māyā', (Yoga-Māyā or Chit-sakti) and 'Bahiranga-Māyā' (His Power of delusion); it is the latter, regarded as an '*amsa*' of the former, that is referred to here.

P. 165 (39) *M.* takes the reading 'avaśah', and translates 'in the hands of Vishnu'.

(43) *S.* 'Here the Ātman is compared to the sun, the *jīva* to its reflection, the internal organ (*antah-karana*) to the water and other reflecting media, the loves and hates that disturb men's minds to the winds that ruffle their surface. *V.* 'The manifoldness of the *jīva* is only due to the *upādhis* of life and form: otherwise he is pure *Jñāna*, hence the example of the mutations of the reflection of the sun in water etc. The comparison is only partial; for whereas the sun itself does not undergo any changes, the *jīva* actually enters the body and gets confused. The only point of the comparison is the reality of unity and the appearance of multiplicity'.

P. 166 (51) *V.* takes the reference to timber and fire to mean the appearance of fire when the wood is churned at a sacrifice; its appearance being quicker in the man whose '*adrishta*' is good, slower otherwise.

(58) 'the resolute': *M.* 'of truthful natures'; for 'the base', he would substitute 'poor men' or 'men with evil masters' and makes it apply to Vasudeva.

Ch. II. P. 167 (2) *R.* (*v.r.*): 'who had the support of the strong King of Magadha' or of 'Bali and the King of Magadha'.

P. 168 (9) 'with . . . puissance': *R.* 'with my fraction'; he takes it to refer to Sankarshana.

(15) 'in . . . fullness': *R.* takes '*Amsa-bhāgena*' (*jātasya*) to refer to Vasudeva, meaning 'to Vasudeva, who was an *amsa* of the gods'.

(18) 'determinate . . . Achyuta': *R.* 'He who was a fraction of Hari, His black hair'.

P. 169 (21) 'No man . . . valour': *S.* (*alt.*) 'Since this Hari (Who is intent on the gods' work) will not remit His efforts to destroy Me'.

R. 'Now, how should I act, to prevent Hari frustrating me?'; *M.* (*v.r.*) 'Being intent on my own purpose, how should I act now,

without delay, in order to give trouble to Hari Who is now here (in Devaki's womb)?

(24) 'going about': R. (v.r.) 'drinking'.

(25) 'Him... desire': R. (v.r.) 'Him, the omniscient Lord'.

'That... be': M. 'That art unique, being compact of perfect knowledge and bliss'.

(26) 'the Truth present in them': S. 'As the Inner Ruler of the five elements, when the world is in being'; R. 'That art established in the immutable *ākāśa*'. 'That art... Truth': R. 'That art different from the real world of *chit* and *achit*') *Sukap.* (alt.) 'That art known only through the Veda'. 'unchanging... time': R. 'That hast Prakṛti, Puruṣa and Kāla for Thy body'. 'the Cause... elements': R. 'the Origin of the universe of *chit* and *achit*'; M. 'the Origin of Mukhya-Prāṇa'.

'the Truth that survives them': R. 'truer than the *jivas*, since Thou knowest no limitation on Thy *Jñāna* etc'.

CH. II. (26) 'That inspirest... outlook': R. 'That rulest the sun and the moon' or 'That hast the sun and the moon for Thy eyes'. 'hast... essence': R. and *Śuk*, 'That art immutable in Thy form and essence'; M. 'Whose bliss knows no diminution'.

(27) S. explains the purport as being that the entire world of duality has no existence apart from the Brahma. The 'base' of the universe of Vyāshti and Samashti is Prakṛti; the 'fruits', happiness and misery; the 'roots', the three *gunas*; the *purusharthas*, the four flavours; the senses, the five modes; the sheaths, 'the six states'; the 'barks', the constituents, skin, bone etc, of the body; the 'boughs', the elements, the mind, *buddhi* and ego; the 'hollows', the nine apertures in the body; the 'leaves', the ten breaths; and the 'birds', the *jīvātmā* and the Paramātmā.

R. The 'tree' is the never-ending stream of life; the 'base' is the Brahma, the struts (of the banyan tree) are the subtle elements, the 'branches' are hands, feet, head, neck, chest and stomach; the 'leaves' are 'the ten objects of sense', or 'the ten *prāṇas*' *Sukap* takes 'base' to refer to Prakṛti. M. The fruits' are Pravṛtti and Nirvṛtti; 'roots', the objects of the senses; the 'branches' the eight kinds of creation, gods, demigods, men, beasts, etc. the 'leaves', the ten organs of sense and action; the birds, the *jīvas* engaged in Pravṛtti and Nirvṛtti *mārgas*.

P. 170 (30) S. 'This refers to men of discrimination intent on *moksha*. Purport of this and next verse: By *samādhi* these men still the mind, and by loving devotion become ripe for emancipation. *Moksha* itself, though the result of the dawn of Self-knowledge, is facilitated by the Lord's grace'.

(30-33) The point made in this para is that worship of God conceived as having form is easier, and more rewarding and less risky than the attempt to realize the formless Brahma. It is easier for the devotee to realize the Lord in the heart in deep meditation, than to know the Brahma either by the exercise of reason or from the testimony of Scripture, since reason and Scripture, which derive their light from Him, cannot reveal Him directly.

CH. III. P. 171 (1) 'natal star': Rohini, the star of Brahmā, son of Vishnu.

P. 172 (7) 'the ocean's surge': *R.* (*alt.*) 'with great zeal'.

(9) 'discus . . .': *R.* and *M.* omit 'discus' and read 'other uplifted weapons'.

P. 174 (25) 'Thou . . . Sesha': *M.* 'Denoted by all the names of the Vedas': *R.* 'Thou art called Sesha, (what remains)' *S.* admits 'Asesha' as *alt.* He explains *samjñā* as meaning that 'the Lord keeps in mind the fact that Prakṛti, being withdrawn into Him, must be activated at the proper time'.

(28) 'visible . . . flesh': *R.* and *M.* 'visible to the like of us'.

CH. IV. P. 177 (12) 'do not . . . wretches': *S.* (*alt.*) 'do not injure to no purpose me who am helpless'.

CH. V. P. 180 (4) 'Substances . . .': *M.* does not have this verse.

CH. VI. P. 183 (8) There is an extra verse between first and second lines of verse 8: 'The Lord, though He retained His supremacy over all even on earth, uttered no word, in keeping with the character of a child; the demoness did not know Hari's innate knowledge of the world's doings'.

P. 188 (43) 'rescued . . . death': *R.* and *M.* (*v.r.*) 'Nanda who had gone elsewhere and just returned'.

CH. VII. P. 186. There are two extra verses at the beginning (1) in *R.* and (2) in *M.* *R.* 'Thus doing many deeds and promoting the welfare of the Gopas and Gopis, Vishnu, Janārdana, grew up in Nanda's house'; *M.* 'Vishnu . . . bringing uninterrupted bliss to the Gopas and their women-folk'.

P. 187 (3) There is one extra verse after 3 in *M.* 'Please narrate this in detail, out of compassion, O You who know Dharma, since it can abolish all sins'.

(4) 'turning prone . . .': *M.* (*v.r.*) 'child's being taken to some place outside the house'.

(7) 'under which he lay': *R.* & *M.* omit this.

CH. VII. P. 187 .8) Between verses 8 and 9, there is an extra half-verse in *R.* 'Speaking thus, the people there came running from all directions, being bewildered by the endless debate'.

CH. VII. P. 192 (12) 'a cementing force': *J.* 'esp. between the Yadus and the people of Vraja'.

P. 192 (31) 'when the women . . . chronicled His doings': *S.* (*alt.*) 'when they thus told her of what she regarded as the supreme blessing of her life. . . .'

CH. X. P. 199 (38) 'our heads . . . dwelling place': *J.* & *V. C.* (*alt.*) 'in prostration to all creatures in this Vraja, Thy dwelling place'.

CH. XI. P. 201 (10-20) *S.* does not comment on these verses. But Chitsukha does, and so do others.

P. 202. After 29 there are two verses extra in *M.* 'Having heard those words of Upananda with approval, and being of the same mind, Nanda and other Gopas went home. Then Nanda, summoning the Gopas, told them 'Tomorrow we shall leave for Vṇḍāvana. Get ready'.

CH. XII. *M.*'s commentary on Chs. XII to XIV not available.

P. 207 (29) 'carriion-eating': *S. (alt.)* 'followers of Nirrti, the Rakshasa'.

P. 208 (39). *V. C.* claims that the power to redeem the sinner who has no *bhakti* is unique to Krishna because He is the *Purna-avatāra*.

CH. XIII. Pp. 210-11 (19) 'tender... with': *S.* 'leaves used as whistles' or (reading 'venudala') it might mean 'a piece of bamboo'.

P. 212 (39) 'These are not...': *R.* 'I thought that the calves were the *rishis* and the calf-herds the gods. I find that really all of them are none but Thee. How did this come about?' After verse 39 *R.* has an extra verse, which means that when Brahmā, having secreted the children and the calves returned to his abode, he was disconcerted to find Krishna as a four-faced Brahmā occupying his seat; and rebuffed by his own warders, he had to go away'.

There is one verse extra between 47 and 48 in *R.*: 'They had shoulder-rings of the brightness of the *Śrīvatsa*, and bangles set with brilliants and round like the chank; their breasts bore the *Śrīvatsa* mark, and on their neck lay the *Kaustubha*'.

CH. XIII. P. 214 (57) 'led down again... *Māyā*': *S. (alt.)* 'The Lord removed the magic curtain of *Māyā*, which had confounded Brahmā by showing him that marvellous spectacle'. The version adopted in the translation suggests that Brahmā was vouchsafed a momentary vision of transcendental Truth. But it was too much for Brahmā and so the Lord allowed *Māyā* to reassert her away, having suspended it for a moment, and Brahmā saw Krishna again as the cowherd's child, not as the Supreme.

CH. XIV. P. 215 (2) 'which... people': When the Lord is incarnate for the protection of the world, He makes fruitful Brahmā's work of creation; and the bodies he takes are such as would appeal to His devotees (*S.*).

'because... gross elements': It is compact of immaculate *sattva*.

P. 216 (5) dedicated... to Thee': *Jñāna* can only result from devotion, which may be cultivated by the performance of works enjoined by the Veda in a spirit of dedication. *S.* says even worldly activity informed by that spirit will produce *bhakti*.

(6) 'unlimited by the *gunas*': *S.* renders 'aguna' as 'aparicchinnaguna' 'possessed of endless attributes'.

P. 219 (33): 'only our supreme luck... nectar': Each of the thirteen gods is the inspirer of a particular sense organ. So when the devotee savours the sweetness of the Lord Achyuta—Who presides over the will (*chitta*)—with all his senses, the god that directs a particular sense participates only in the pleasure that he obtains through that sense. Even this partial participation brings the gods infinite happiness; how much more must be the joy of the inhabitants of *Vraja* who imbibed the bliss of the Divine through all their senses!

CH. XIV. P. 222 (58) 'Supreme Abode': *Vaikuntha*.

'things... disaster': The objects of sense-enjoyment, which lead to involvement in the world.

CH. XV. P. 225. (38) The point of the comparison is the diverse colours—tawny-red, white and black—of the heaps on the ground of the fruit, the palm tops and the demon corpses respectively.

CH. XVI. P. 227 (9) 'coiled . . . Him': *R.* and *M.* (*c.r.*) omit this. (12) Instances of the three kinds are earth-tremors, the falling of meteors, and the fluttering of the left eyelids in the male.

P. 228 (15) 'who . . . affection': All the commentators emphasise the affection; *M.* suggests that these simple folk could go only by appearances. *R.* (*v.r.*) 'who loved Krishna, as the cow loves its calf'.

P. 229 (29) *M.* (*v.r.*) 'the Parama.Guru of Chandra—lord of the healing herbs'.

P. 231 (47) contemplative . . . nature': *S.* interprets 'mauna' as 'delight in the Self'.

(48) 'parāvara-gatijnāya': The reference (according to *S.* & *Toshani*) is to the *tattvas*. But *R.* takes it as meaning 'the Deliverer of devotees and the Imposer of bondage on others'. *V.* takes 'para' to refer to Brahman and the like, and 'apara' to all ordinary creatures.

'That art the ground . . . negation': *S.*'s (*alt.*) 'That art free from such states as Viśva, Taijasa etc., but seemest, by reason of Māyā' to experience these states through Thy amsas'.

CH. XVII. P. 233 (2) The translation follows *V.* and *V. C. S.* and other coms. would render 'sarpa-janah' as 'people who wished to propitiate serpents'. The verse would then mean, 'The serpents had been . . . offering him the food that people, who wished to procure immunity by placating the serpents, used to place for them as the foot of the tree'. An 'ākhyāyikā' is quoted by *V.* (possibly the legend that supplies the plot of *Nāgānanda*) in support of his view.

P. 234 (18) Between first and second half of this verse is a half-verse found in *R.* and *J.*: 'moved by love, he put him on his lap, and looked at him again and again'. And between verses 19 and 20, *R.* has an extra verse: 'When the sun had set, Krishna along with Rama arranged for their stay there for the night, with their mother and father, the cows and cowherds'.

CH. XXI. P. 243 (5) *M.* has a slightly different version: 'With peacock plumes on the head, a body like the forester's, with bunches of *Karnikara* in the ears, His face resting on his right arm's (base), He played on the flute held in the other hand, running over the stops with his fingers, while his brows danced in concert; thus teaching the cowherds the pure music of Bharata and entrancing all living beings, He entered Vrndāvana'.

P. 245 (14) 'On tree-boughs fair' . . .': *S.* 'The point of the comparison is this: The sages, whose highest goal is the vision of the Lord, have no use for the fruits of the works described in *Karmamārga*. They devote themselves only to those good and pleasant works (such as worship and other acts of devotion) that are enjoined in the Upasana Kanda; which are compared to a branch full of tender shoots but with no fruits'. There is a pun on 'sākhā', which means both a tree branch and a Vedic recension.

(17) 'How blest . . .': The sight of the saffron particles fired the Pulinda women with the pangs of love; but they were allayed by the joy they felt when they rubbed it on their face and breasts. The saffron had adorned the breasts of the Lord's loves; when they embraced His feet, the saffron had stuck to the feet and thus

gained in richness of tint from the rosy red of the feet.

P. 246 (19) 'Brought...trees': The paradox describes the motionless ecstasy of the living beings, who heard the flute, and the thrill of the trees shivering with delight.

CH. XXII. (16) After this there is a half-verse in *R* and *V.C.*: 'if you don't, I will not give you the clothes. What can the old king do?'

(19) After this there are $3\frac{1}{2}$ verses in *R. M.* and *Krm.*: 'On hearing those words of the mighty soul, informed by Dharma, the girls bowed with one hand, while hiding (the private parts) with the other. Thereupon He told them, conformably with Dharma, 'Those who know the Veda say that he who bows to the Lord Achyuta with only one hand deserves to have that hand chopped off'. 'So one should bow to the Lord with both hands. Doing that you will be pleasing me'.

CH. XXIII. P. 248 (26) 'rarely sprouts again': 'Except in such cases as Dhruva's by free choice (*S*) The text uses the singular 6th case feminine; so *S.* suggests that the Lord's intention was to confer release on the solitary woman who was prevented from seeing Him.

P. 249 (11) 'martyatmanah': *S.* suggests that they were conceited thinking of their rank and status; *V.* suggests that they looked upon themselves as mere men bound by all human limitations and could not imagine that Krishna, seeming mortal, might be the Lord Himself.

P. 252 (31) 'the gods themselves...': *S.* suggests that the Lord showed the sacrificers' wives the gods, who were present and approved.

(32) There is a verse after this in *J*, and *R.*: 'Love for Me grows not so much by proximity as by hearing and speaking about Me and meditating on Me; so go home'.

CH. XXIV. P. 255 (11) 'fear' and 'security' stand for involvement in the transmigratory existence, and liberation respectively (*S.*)

(19) 'the man who gives...': In *M.* version this appears as vs. 24.

CH. XXV. P. 257 (6) 'whose ego...inflated': The text has 'adhmayitat manam', which *S.* renders as 'whose bodies had waxed fat' but 'mind' or 'ego' seems better than 'body' in the context.

CH. XXVII. P. 262 (4) 'flux of gunas': i.e., *samsara*, and its concomitant the body, the product of the *gunas*. But while the Lord is free from these, and the anger, greed etc., which are both their cause and consequence, He, as the Safeguarder of Dharmas, chastises the unrighteous.

P. 263 (17) 'carry on, all of you': The plural has been used to suggest that the Lord wanted the other Guardians of the worlds like Varuna to take this as a warning to them too.

CH. XXVIII. P. 264 (5) Between first and second half of verse 5 is a half-line, 'By sight of you, O Lord my eyes and tongue have found fulfilment' (*R.*). After verse 8, *R.* has an extra half-verse. its purport: 'your father was brought here, so that we could have sight of Thee. We, being your subjects, should be vouchsafed your grace though we have done wrong'.

P. 265 (11) 'reveal...Self': 'known as the Brama (S.)

CH. XXIX. P. 267 (15) 'become...merged in Him': *Sukap*: 'come to forget their hatred etc. and are filled with true knowledge of Him. He instances Sisupala who (he says) was so much taken up with Krishna's beauty that he forger his enmity; only thus do those who are wholly dependent on the Lord attain freedom. (16) 'It should...effect this': When the Brahma is incarnate with all His powers unobstructed, it is not necessary that the souls on whom He sheds His grace, because they love Him, should know that He is the Brahma (S.).

CH. XXX. P. 271-2, Verses 14 to 23 are not to be found in *M*. P. 272 (23) 'A woman...afraid': *R.* (v.r.) 'One bound another with a wreath saying, 'I shall bind you, breaker of the curd-pot and thief of butter, to a mortar', and the latter looked frightened'.

CH. XXXI. P. 274 (2) 'Let us see Thee': (*alt.*) 'See for Thyself' or 'See how we seek Thee'.

(4) 'Among...clan': (*alt.*) 'in a family of devotees'.

(6) *M.* version reads this as (2) and (2) as (3). It has not got (19). P. 278 (18) 'Give us a jot of that thing which would end the heart's smart': *S.* suggests that 'that thing which would end the sufferings of Gopis, is something well known to the Lord, but not to be published to all the world'.

P. 279 (16) 'knowing': i.e. 'knowing that we were coming'; (*alt.*) 'We who know Thy ways'.

(19) The last verse is in a different metre, suggestive of less excitement, and more wistfulness and longing; it almost sinks into inaudible self-communing in the last quarter.

CH. XXXII. P. 279 (3) *R.* has an extra verse after this; purport: 'Drinking in the beauty of Krishna's face again and again from their eyes (like cups), they were no more satisfied than the saintly are, gazing at His feet'.

(11) *M.* reads 'suratānila' (the beauty that stimulates desire) for 'surabhyānila' ('the fragrant breeze').

(12) *M.* reads 'Kṛshneshāyastā' ('the arm that reached out from the desire to touch Krishna') for 'the Krishna's...hands'.

P. 280 'the contrary...not love them': *M.* 'they bestow what is unpleasant or undesired on those who do not worship or serve them'.

CH. XXXIII. P. 281 (11) 'the Lord...mace': Some coms. take the word 'Gadābhṛtāh' too literally, though it is evidently used as one of the numerous appellations of the Lord. They suggest that He may have had something like a dance-master's baton in His hand!

P. 282 (17) 'like a child...reflection': i.e. the Lord enjoyed Himself, without taking the play too seriously or succumbing to the arts of the women. *S.* suggests that it was by transmitting to the Gopis all arts and all charms, of which He is the sole source, and thus objectivising them, that the Lord diverted Himself, playing with them.

P. 284 (35) 'even those...feet': 'These are the *bhaktas*, says *S.*,

and he interprets 'yoga' in the same verse as '*jñāna*'. Others render 'yogis' as 'karma-yogis' who have freed themselves from the sway of *karma*, while they render 'munayah' as '*jñānis*'.

CH. XXXV. P. 287 (4) 'laughter garland-bright': (*alt.*) 'laughter that ravishes the heart'.

Pp. 288-289 (14-15) The melodic patterns are not only new but played for the first time in its history on the flute; this is what baffles Indra, Siva and Brahmā, though they are all masters of the science and art of music (*S.*).

P. 289 (18) 'He reckoned': Presumably by using stones of different colours to classify cattle according to their colour (hazard the commentators).

CH. XXXVI. P. 290 There is an extra verse in *R.*, *M.*, *V.* and *N.*, which may be rendered thus: 'With dilated eyes, monstrous, gaping mouth, huge neck, and the appearance of a big black cloud, the malicious creature went to Nanda's Vraja, shaking the earth with his tread, to promote Kamsa's designs'.

P. 292. (24) In *M.* there are 3 extra verses after this, in which Kamsa explains to the superintendent of the elephant stables that he need have no qualms about killing Krishna by means of Kuvalayāpida, since Kamsa himself was really no relation of Krishna's, but was born to a Gandharva, Drumila, who took advantage of his (Kamsa's) mother's ignorance of the fact that it was not her husband who consorted with her, but this demigod disguised as Ugrasena.

CH. XXXVII. P. 294 (13) The reference to Pramathas (*S.* suggests) may allude to the King of Kāsi, Poundraka's friend and ally, being a devotee of Śiva and an incarnation of a Pramatha.

CH. XXXVIII. P. 298 (18) *M.* omits this verse.

CH. XXXIX. P. 300. *M.* omits verses 4 to 7.

P. 303 (34) 'in . . favourable reply': i.e. to their last appeal to Him (*Tosh.*). *S.*'s rendering ('*pratyākhyānam*') might mean Krishna's last-minute refusal to go to Mathurā.

CH. XL. P. 305: *M.* has a first verse which runs: 'Having seen him thus, Akrura, his heart and senses serene, extolled the Lord of the lotus eyes, his head bowed in devotion'.

P. 307 (25) 'transient': *S.* 'the fruits of *karma*'; 'unreal': the body; 'painful': progeny, possessions etc. Every experience is mixed up with its opposite; so men who are attracted by what is pleasant would seem to welcome the unpleasant that is inseparable from it. The Lord alone is pure Bliss and the sole object of the love of the soul. (29) 'controller . . *jīva*': The 'ruler' referred to may be time, *karma*, disposition, and so on, which bring a man happiness and misery. *S.* (*alt.*): 'Pradhāna is Prakṛti, Puruṣa is the entity who is served by Prakṛti; and Īśa is the Lord as time starting the work of Prakṛti; the Brahma is here described as That whose manifestations these three are'.

CH. XLIV. P. 321 (57) 'when they bowed to them': While both *R.* and *V.*, (as well as *J.* as an alternative) take this to mean, 'When Rama and Krishna bowed to their parents', and this is followed in the translation, *S.* and others, following the *V. P.*, take it to

mean that it was the parents that bowed to their children, overawed by their realization of their greatness.

CH. XLV, P. 325 (9) 'oppressed by the enemy': This is construed by coms. as applying to the parents.

CH. XLVI, P. 327 (31): The two are spoken of as being really one, since both are *amśas* of Hari-Narayana. He is 'master and mentor', because He is creator and controller, 'seed and womb': the efficient and the material causes. They are described also as 'Purusha' and 'Pradhāna' because 'Purusha' is but an *amśa* of the Lord and 'Pradhāna' is His Power. (This is not the view of the classical Sāṅkhya. *Tr.*). Being 'beginningless', they are the cause and controller of the *jīva* (S.).

CH. XLVI, P. 329 (49) All coms. take 'master' to refer to Kamsa. Akrura had taken Krishna to the city at Kamsa's behest and thus propitiated him. Though, as it turned out, that was to Kamsa's undoing, the Gopis spitefully suggest (according to the reading 'pretasya' for 'pritasya') that Akrura, still the loyal servant, has now come to propitiate the manes of Kamsa, by taking the Gopi's to the city, to offer them up as sacrifice to the soul of the departed.

CH. XLVII, P. 330(62) As the black bee's whiskers are red in colour, she fancifully represents it as saffron sticking, which the bee had carried off from the Lord's garland, which was smeared with the saffron on the breasts of the city women when they embraced Him. When the bee, flying about, approaches her foot, she pictures him as having come to plead his master's cause. She twits the bee, tactless and shameless in thus exposing his master's escapades, as being worthy of his master, who by displaying his amours thus among his kin in their assemblies will earn their scorn.

(13) 'uttama-¹ loka' (illustrious) seems to have the overtones of wondering surprise that, in spite of His goings on, the sages should still be ecstatic in their praise of the Lord.

P. 331 (14) 'We knew so well of yore' ('purānam'): The Gopi means that Krishna is no stranger to her and her friends and the bee is not going to tell them anything she does not know about Him. But there may be an unobtrusive pun here. 'He is the Ancient of Days. And we ('homeless ones') are the souls yearning for liberation that have long sought Him, relinquishing all worldly ties'. This train of thought is explicitly followed in the seventh verse.

(15) She says that the attribute 'Glorious' has come to be applied to the Lord by virtue of His sympathy and compassion for the suffering, and she complains that Krishna is being untrue to His name.

(17) The reference in the first half of the verse is to the Lord's having killed in the Rama *avatārā* Vali, the ape-king, and having had Surpanakhā disfigured.

'like a crow': This is according to S. His *alt.* reading would mean, 'Having like a crow eaten his food, He bound Bali'

(18) Here again there is an underlying suggestion that the devotees who listen to the Lord's glory become so enamoured of Him and so disgusted with the misery of routine existence that they, having been

freed from the sway of the pairs of opposites—likes and dislikes, pain and pleasure, and so on—have renounced, and come to the forest to live as renouncers intent on securing the grace of the Lord. P. 322 (20-21) The last two verses complete the conversion from the mood of petulant remonstrance to that of loving welcome for the messenger who has come from the Beloved. The bee, having in its erratic way flown away for a while and returned, provides the opening for this explicit avowal of eagerness for re-union.

P. 335 (58) 'Those . . . death': These are men who yearn for liberation (*lit.*): 'the sages . . .'; those who are already liberated; 'we too': *i.e.* the devotees. (S.) He offers as *alt.* 'the three births of the Brahmana', *i.e.* being born as one, being initiated into the Gāyatri, and performing Vedic sacrifices.

CH. XLVII. P. 340 () 'gacchasva': S. (*alt.*) takes 'sva' as a separate word and renders it as 'O Sir, you who are one of us'.

P. 341 (II) 'Master-yogi': Commander of Māyā with its infinite resources (S.) 'Suddhāya': S. 'Soul of Dharma.' He renders the other attributes thus: Brahmanē: 'the Limitless'; 'Paramātmāne'; 'the Companion of the *jīva*'; 'Yogeswaraya': 'Wielder of the yogic Powers' and 'Yogāya' as given in the translation.

BOOK X (Pt. II)

(a) *Variations from standard text*

In the Second Part of Book X there are to be found considerable additions to, and a smaller number of omissions from the standard text, especially in the Madhva version. The standard text (called the Vulgate here for convenience) is that which is commented upon by most of the commentators. The variations found in *M.* and to a smaller extent in *R.* are briefly summarised below:

CH. L. In the place of verse 11, *M.* has 16 verses. Of these the first ten elaborate the substance of verse 4, describing who were Jarāsandha's allies and which part of the city they were besieging. Verses 11 to 16 describe the celestial weapons and chariots that came down for the use of Krishna and Balarama. After vs. 20 *R.* and *M.* have 14 extra verses detailing the disposition of the defence forces and the beginning of the fierce fight. After vs. 24, *R.* and *M.* have 17 extra verses describing the encounter between Krishna and Śiśupāla. After vs. 30, *M.* has 5 extra verses describing how Balarama vanquished Jarāsandha. On the other hand *M.* has not got the following verses found in the Vulgate: (1) from the latter half of 16 to the 20th; and (2) verse 34.

M. has got 4 extra Chapters, numbered Ch. L. to Ch. L.III, in his version, containing 164 verses in all. The following is a brief summary:

CH. L.: Jarāsandha returns to the attack in the third month. By a surprise sortie in the early morning Krishna routs his forces. CH. LI: Jarāsandha secures the alliance of Bānāsura, but he is again defeated along with Kumbhānda and Kupakarna, Bāna's Generals. CH. LII: Returning to Mathura, the brothers go down South wishing

to climb up the mount Gomantaka. On the way they meet Parasurama, who blesses them and tells them that they should fight with and defeat Śṛṅgāla Vāsudeva, ruler of Karaveera, situated at the foot of the hill. They do so.

CH. LIII: Rama and Krishna go up Gomantaka and enjoy its beauty. Meanwhile Bali on a visit to the Svetadwipa, had taken away Vishnu's crown. Garuda, pursuing him, recovers the crown, and on his way back finds Krishna on Gomantaka and, recognising Him for Vishnu, makes his obeisances to Him and promises to come whenever He should think of him. After some months at Karaveera the brothers return to Mathurā. At this point, the *M.* version merges in the Vulgate Chapter LI from verse 43.

CH. LII. Between verses 6 and 7 in Ch. LII (of the Vulgate), *M.* has 7 extra verses, in which Jarāsandha's forces are described as taking the brothers unawares and surrounding them. But they scatter them, and then finding that Jarāsandha with the main body of His army seeks to take them, they feign unwillingness to meet him and run away. After vs. 11. *M.* has another 10 verses dealing elaborately with the brothers' ascent of the Pravaraṣana peak of Mount Gomantaka and their escape.

M.'s Chapter LVI contains 17 verses recounting Kṛtavarma's visit to Hastināpura at Krishna's instance to enquire of the welfare of the Pāṇḍavas, who were reported to have taken King Drupada captive in a battle. He returns with good tidings.

After vs. 15 in the Vulgate Ch. LII, there are some verses in *M.* elaborating Rāivata's conversation with Brahmā and his bestowing his daughter Revati on Balarāma. The version explains that the latter, finding her as tall as the people of Kṛtayuga usually were, reduced her to normal human size by pulling her down with his plough.

CH. LII. In Rukmini's message, according to the *M.* version, there are two additional verses. In the first she prays to Him to accept her, as He, the Consort of Lakshmi, always responds to those who invoke His help. In the second verse, she exhorts Him to take her along with her maids of honour from the temple, with the aid of His army.

In the same Chapter there is an extra verse after vs. 50, in which Rukmini is said have also worshipped in the adjacent temple of Sachi and Indra.

CH. LV. This figures as Ch. 68 of *M.* with three verses added at the beginning, stating that Hari propitiated Sankara and got Pradyumna for son by His grace; and Pradyumna was none other than Kāma, who had been burnt by the fire of Siva's eye.

Between Chapter LIX and LX of the Vulgate the *M.* version has three Chapters (numbered 65 to 67) containing 153 verses in all. They relate the story of how the *pārijāta* tree was brought from the celestial Nandana to Dwarakā by Krishna at the insistence of Satyabhāmā who was prompted partly by the desire to shine in the eyes of Krishna's other wives, and partly by pique at what she regarded as Sachi's lack of deference to her. Krishna reluctantly agreed to do her wish. Indra and the other Guardians of the world offered armed

resistance. Satyabhāmā herself vanquished Kubera by her bowmanship, and the others had all to beat a retreat before Garuda and Krishna. Ultimately Indra appologised and allowed the *pārijāta* to be taken and planted in Satyabhāmā's garden.

CH. LX. At the beginning of Ch. LX of the Vulgate *M.* has four extra verses. Purport: 'The King wanted to know whether Sri Krishna was equally attached to all His queens, each one of whom fancied she was specially dear to Him or whether he showed preference for anybody. Sri Suka answered, 'Everybody knows that Rukmini was His best-beloved. Once there was a lovers' quarrel between them. Listen, and I will tell you'.

CH. LXII. After this there are ten extra verses in *M.* which relate how Rukmini propitiated the Lord Siva at Srisaila and was granted by him a bow that would enable him to be victorious over every one except Vishnu; if it was employed against the latter, it would disappear. It was this fear that kept him from quarrelling with Krishna.

CH. LXIII. This Chapter is omitted in *M.* CH. LXIV figures in the *M.* version as part of Ch. LXXXVII, beginning with verse 13 of that Chapter.

CH. LXVI. This figures as Ch. 69 in *M.* with 15 extra verses at the beginning, explaining that Paundraka was Vasudeva's son by the daughter of the King of Kāsi, and ruled Kasi, as his grandfather had no sons.

CH. LXVIII. P. 414 (4) Between the first and second lines of this verse *M.* has an extra verse, which means, 'along with Dussasana and Sakuni, who always gave evil counsel, and disregarding the advice of Vidura and Gāndhārī'.

CH. LXXI. (3) Between the first and the second half of this verse there is an extra verse in *R*: 'We should now go to Indraprastha. And with his (Yudhishtira's) permission you should slay (Jarāsandha)'.

CH. LXXVI. (4) Between the first and second halves of this verse there is a verse and a half extra in *M.* 'Since he was absent for long years in the penitential woods, his ministers crowned his younger brother King. By severe austerities the King (Salva) pleased the Lord'.

CH. LXXVI. (2) After this there are ten verses extra in *M.* which relate that one day Narada came to Yudhishtira's court. He was questioned as to who was the King that was fully prepared for war. The sage said that all except Salva were afraid of Krishna's valour, but he, eager to revenge the death of his brother Hamsa at the hands of Vishnu, was itching to fight and for this purpose had conferred with Dantavakra etc.

(8) After this there are eight more verses extra in *M.* They say that while Krishna was not surprised, or too seriously concerned, He sent Ugrasena and others to meet the menace. Salva, having meanwhile heard of Sisupala's and Jarāsandha's death, marched on Dvarakā.

CH. LXXVII. (7-18) In the place of these verses *M.* has 26 other verses. Purport: 'Seeing disturbing portents of war, He (Krishna) took leave of the sages and started from Indraprastha accompanied

by the Pandavas and their ministers. Taking leave of the latter and the local people after a short distance, he travelled quickly towards the west. Salva meanwhile returned in his aerial vehicle to his own home. Sāmba and Pradyumna harried his army in the rear, and slew his Commanders. Krishna reached Dvārakā and found the city beleaguered. The Lord took a vow that He would not enter it before destroying the Soubha and overtook Salva who had hid himself in the bowels of the sea. In a fierce encounter, Salva's army was slaughtered. The Sārnga fell from Krishna's hand and Salva boasted that he would revenge the death of his brothers.

(30) There are 9 extra verses after this in *M*. Purport: 'The Lotus-eyed resolved to slay Sālva. He let fly his discus at the Soubha, inspirited with the might of the god of fire. The Soubha was shattered and fell into the sea. Sālva jumped out and occupying a chariot, let fly his mace at Krishna. The latter shattered it and blew on His conch. (32) After this there are 7 extra verses in *M*, describing the slaying of Sālva, after a fierce battle, by Krishna using His discus, and the latter's triumphant entry into Dvārakā.

CH. LXXXVIII. In the place of the nine verses from 5 to 13, *M*. has sixteen verses. But there is no material difference in substance.

After verse 16, the *M*. version has a summary account of the Mahabharata war in 40 verses. Balarama goes on a pilgrimage.

CH. LXXX. At the beginning *M*. has 16 verses extra describing the end of the Mahabharata war, Krishna's placing Yudhishtira on the throne and returning to Dvārakā. From verse 17 begins his version of the Kuchela story.

CH. LXXXII to LXXXV. These figure as Chs. LXX to LXXIV of *M*.

(b) Notes (Contd).

CH. L, P. 345 (31) 'one lion . . another': *R*. (v.r.) 'as a lion might pounce on a lesser beast'.

CH. LII. P. 356 (36) *S*. assumes that Rukmini's message was a written one and at the Lord's instance the Brahmana read it out to Him; *M*. suggests that the Lord read it Himself; others, that it might have been delivered orally.

CH. LIII. P. 359 (24) 'She fears He might have thought it forwardness on her part to have taken the initiative and so on second thoughts decided against marrying her, though His initial impulse was to respond to her appeal; which would explain His having detained the Brahmana' (*S*).

P. 356 (42) *S*. suggests *alts*. (1) 'you are wrong in wishing well of those (because they are your brothers) who oppress the world, as that might mean injury to those who befriend all creatures'. (2) 'You are wrong to regard with dislike the salutary punishment inflicted on them (your relations) who are the enemies of the world'. (46-47) These are not to be found in *M*.

CH. LVI. P. 370 (1) 'Satrājīt' is also spelt 'Satrājita'.

P. 371 (11) 'loads' reckoned differently by different authorities. According to *S*. a 'bāra' is equal to 20 'tulās'; one 'tula' is a

hundred 'palas', one 'pala' is four 'karshas' and a 'karsha' is eight 'dharanas'; one dharana' is eight 'panas', one 'pana' is five 'gunjas' one gunja' is four 'vrihis'. Others reckon differently.

CH. LVII. P. 373. In his introductory note S. suggests that Akura played his rather dubious part in the incidents related in this Chapter with the knowledge of Krishna.

CH. LVIII. P. 379 (37) 'How could I hope . . .': S. does not comment on this verse. Most of the others read it after the next and attribute it to Nagnajit. But V. treats it as expressing Satyā's intense yearning and her anxiety to know how she may propitiate the Lord. This is the interpretation here followed.

CH. LIX. (P. 381 (2-5) M. version rewrites these in its own words, though there is no substantial change in meaning. Likewise in verses 10 to 17 there are many variant readings.

P. 382 (16-17) The marvel was that the fighters (and their mounts) had been killed before the weapons they had aimed at the Lord reached Him; by the time they came, He was ready to cut them down, with three arrows for each one of them.

(25) 'The Inner Ruler of all hearts': This is how S. renders 'Param-ātman'.

(27) The Lord is spoken of as 'Purusha' ('He who lies in the heart'); and the doubt might arise how That Which contains all that exists can Itself be contained in every creature; hence it is explained that Purusha has also been defined by *Śruti* as 'the Fore-existent'.

(29) This verse answers the objection it implicitly raises. The Sāṅkhya and other similar systems maintain that it is the *gunas* that produce the world of causes and effects, and they are the constituents of Pradhāna, whose state of equilibrium is disturbed by Purusha at the appropriate time, resulting in creation. To this the answer is that time, Pradhāna and Purusha are all but the Lord while He Himself is distinct from and beyond them all.

P. 384 (42) After this there are two extra verses in R. Purport: 'How can one be surprised that the foe of Mura could be present simultaneously with every one of His queens, seeing that His power is limitless and He always grants His devotees' wishes? To this day the Lord of yoga, Krishna, is seen by His devotees within, without and all around, in hundreds and thousands of forms'.

CH. LX. P. 386 (12) 'had . . . throne': The qualification has in view the acceptance of a throne by Ugrasena, who was also a Yadu. (The Lord explains elsewhere the true reason—that He respected Yayāti's curse on his eldest-born).

P. 387 (20) 'to the body, to house and home': The text has 'gehayoh'. S. takes it as 'deha-gehayoh' since the 'body' is to the enlightened as much alien as other possessions.

P. 388 (34) 'I am not . . . great': M. 'there is none equal to Thee, certainly not I'.

'Courtied by the ignorant'. S. 'She, though an incarnation of Lakshmi, is but an ordinary soul whom only those who are anxious to possess the things they desire propitiate, while the aspirants for liberation go to the Lord'.

(35) 'Thy very . . . occupies': *M.* 'I, devoted to Thee, consign to the deepest darkness those who are kings only by name (not being devoted to the true interests of the people)'.

P. 389 (40): 'It is absurd . . . say': *R.* suggests that only stupid people would be misled by the words 'Rajabhyo-bibhyatah' of vs. 12, since the second word of the compound is 'abibhyatah' ('being unafraid of kings').

(41) This is in refutation of vs. 13. Those who put their faith in the Lord, far from suffering, have attained their goal.

P. 390 (50) 'putting an end to all desire': This is itself the state of *moksha*.

P. 391 (54) 'brings release': because it is untainted by desire for pleasure.

CH. LXIV. P. 400 (35) 'Indra Thy arm': This is illustrative; all the four Guardians of the worlds are the arms of the *Virāt-purusha*.

P. 405 (31) 'the fire . . . roots': While fire too, like poison, can consume only by contact, and it leaves the roots (of plants etc.) buried beneath the surface untouched, the sin of depriving the Brahmana of his property destroys the sinner without physically touching him, and it also casts into hell his ancestors.

CH. LXV. P. 408 (32) This is the interpretation favoured by *V.* and *V. C.* but *R.* would render it thus: 'all those nights passing as swiftly as if they were but a single night'.

CH. LXVI. P. 411 (31) 'as serviceable . . . priest': *i.e.*, One who would do his wish (an indirect allusion to the Vedic description of fire as 'the Lord of the sacrifice, the Chief Priest').

CH. LXXI. 428 (10) 'All this . . . karma': The 'karmas' may be those of everybody concerned; of the captive kings, or of Jarāsandha himself (which is suggested more explicitly in the *alt.* reading *pāpavipāka*), or of his associates like the king of Chedi, etc. who were to die as the direct or indirect result of the sacrifice.

CH. LXXXII. P. 468 (46-47) 'You should know . . . Brahmā': While the bodies of living creatures, being material, are as much permeated as other material substances are by the gross elements which are their cause, the soul pervades them as experiencer, not as Cause. But the soul, as well as all material things including bodies, are pervaded by the Brahma. That is also the ground of their manifestation.

P. 477 (37) The path of *karma*, prescribed in the Veda, is easy to follow, being in accord with our natural impulse to strive for the joys of this life and of the life hereafter; but, by purifying the mind it gradually eliminates such desires and brings the mind peace and thus paves the way for liberation. Therefore failure to discharge that duty would be sinful.

CH. LXXXV. P. 480 (15) *gatim sukshmām* is paraphrased as '*nish-prapanchām gatim*' by *S.* and translated above as 'the undifferentiated Reality'; differentiation in the One Reality—manifesting only as the phenomenal universe. 'lack of understanding': which leads to the identification of the body with the Self, the consequent rousing of desires and the involvement in works.

CH. LXXXVI. P. 489 (48): 'caused and uncaused': Prakṛti and its evolutes.

CH. LXXXVII. P. 490. Parīkṣhit, taking up the statement of Śuka, concluding the last chapter, which in effect meant that the Lord had taught His disciples the way shown by the Vedas to the knowledge of the Brahma, asks how the Vedas, consisting of words, can teach us about the Brahma, Which, by definition, is beyond the scope of words. The answer is that, while they cannot reveal the Brahma directly, they describe the Brahma as Iswara Who, employing Māyā, manifests the universe, without in any way being affected in His essential nature as Existence—Knowledge—Bliss. He does this for the *jīvas*' benefit, endowing them with the faculties which enable them to work for the four *puruṣārthas*. The consummation of Isvara's work is the realization by the *jīva* of his identity with the Brahma.

P. 491 (3) 'This secret teaching' may refer to the verse beginning, 'The Supreme Lord . . .' or it may refer to the whole of the Vedas' Hymn. 'By ridding . . . possessions': 'By freeing himself from the limiting adjuncts such as the body' (S.).

P. 492 (14) Nescience induces desire for the illusory objects of the senses, the products of the *gunas*. Desire begets *karma*, which leads to the endless cycle of birth and death. The Vedas teach the paths of *bhakti* and *karma* for breaking the vicious circle. In the mind cleansed by them the Upanishadic knowledge of the Self, mediated by the Guru, may, by the Grace of God, become Self-intuition. The hymn is the Vedas' appeal to the Lord to bestow His Grace on the *jīvas* and awaken their power.

15) The Lord is both the material and efficient cause of the universe and the only Reality. The world process makes no change in His essential nature.

(16) 'promptings of the mind': likes and dislikes etc. 'Viscissitudes of time': Old age, and so on.

(17) Within the body, the Lord stands forth as the five-fold sheath ('*annamayam*', '*prāṇamayam*' etc.) and activates them, but He is aloof from them, being the Self-luminous Witness. So the verse speaks of Him as that which comes to be spoken of after all the sheaths; this is the *Brahma-puccham pratishthā* (*Tai-Up.* II. 5).

(18) Here the Vedas mention two Upanishadic meditations, which contemplate on Him as seated (1) in the Manipura Centre, and (2) in the heart (Anāhata Centre). For the Śāṅkarākhyaś, See Ch. Up. V. 15. 1. The meaning of *kurpa-dṛṣa* is doubtful. S. first renders it as 'those with grit in their eyes' (which is literal for *s'ārkarākshāḥ*), and suggests that it might mean 'sthuladr̥śaḥ' 'men whose vision is not subtle'. Alternatively he renders '*kurpa*' as '*sukshma*' and suggests that it might mean that this is practised as preparation for the second stage of 'meditation in the heart'. Monier-Williams renders *kurpa* as 'the space between the eye-brows' and '*kurpa-dṛṣaḥ*', as 'one whose eyes are formed in a peculiar manner.'

(20) This verse maintains that, rightly considered, there is no justification for the view (provisionally put forward in the last verse) of

the bondage of the *jīva*. The Advaita commentators consider this as amounting to a refutation of the doctrine, associated with the name of Bhārati Krishna Tirtha, of the phenomenal nature of the *jīva* and the upholding the *Vivaraṇa* view. The *jīva* is as free and as little conditioned by limitations such as the body ('effect') and nescience ('cause') as *Īśvara*, Himself, though he does not realize it. He is here spoken as the 'amśa' of the Lord (which S. renders as *tad-rupam*).

The word 'sva-krta', which occurs in verses 19 and 20 has different meanings in the two places. The Lord creates the universe, including the bodies which the *jīva* tenants; the *jīva* has earned that body by his past *karma* and may thus be spoken of as the maker of his own body. (21) This verse is taken by the commentators as contradicting the view that *bhakti* is a lesser means to *mukti* than *jñāna*. S. quotes from the Nṛsimha-tāpani Upanishad and the commentary on it attributed to Śrī Śaṅkara, pointing out that even 'the blessed master, the omniscient author of the Bhashya' endorses this claim. (A modern scholar has argued that Viṣṇu-svami must be the 'blessed master' referred to and that he was the author of the Bhashya on the *N.T. Up*).

(23) 'Sama-dṛśah', which S. takes as nominative plural, applying to the Vedic *mantra*, is taken by some other commentators as genitive singular and applying to the Lord.

(24) Between the Lord and his creatures are interposed such obstacles as the body, and so on; and so they cannot possibly know Him. When He retracts it all into Himself, the possibility of knowing Him is even less, though the body and other barriers are not there, because the mind and all other faculties are locked in slumber and the Veda, the source of knowledge, has also been absorbed in the Lord. 'The two classes of gods': the *Ādhyātmika* and the *Ādhidaivika*.

(25) The doctrines criticised here are respectively those held by the Vaiseshikas, the *Yogīs*, the Naiyāyikas, the Sāṅkhyas and the Mimāṃsakas; all based on the false postulate of multiplicity.

(26) The universe, made up of the three qualities, though unreal, seems real because it is projected by the mind on the substrate, the Brahman, and thus partakes of Its reality; and that, again, is why the *jīva* seems to exist separately as a distinct entity. The enlightened do in fact look upon it all as real from the point of view of the reality of the Brahman. The Brahman is its material cause, and the Paramātmā has, creating it, entered it and informs it as the Ātman. Hence the analogy of gold and jewels made of gold.

(27) The Upanishadic teaching about the Lord being all that exists, remains mere intellectual apprehension and thus incapable of removing the nescience that causes the transmigratory life. It is only by devotion to the Lord that the mind is purified, and then it is the Lord's Grace that transforms intellectual apprehension into the intuitive knowledge that straightway frees.

(29) In starting the *jīvas* again on the *samsāric* life at the beginning of every new creation, the Lord is neither capricious nor partial. Being the First Cause detracts so little from His integrity that

He is spoken of by the Veda as the Void—*asad-vā idameva agra-āsīt*. (30) It is pointed out that there are logical difficulties in assuming that *avidyā* is one only or that *jīvas* are many. These vanish if it is realized that the *jīva* is one only but seems many because of the reflection of *Īśvara* in different *avidyās*; the state of bondage of the *jīva*, in which he is ruled by *Īśvara*, persists only so long as *avidyā* persists. For *Īśvara* there is no bondage, *Māyā* being subject to Him.

The second half of the verse points that the *Antaryāmi Brahmanam* of the *Brhadāraṇyaka Upanishad* supports this view. Because the *jīvas* are reflections of *Īśvara* and thus derive from Him. He remains present within them all, Himself being pervasive, and controls them, as the cause always controls effect. The verse suggests that how He does this baffles the discursive intellect.

(31) This verse points out that 'birth' in the context of the *jīva* applies only to the limiting adjuncts which obscure its true nature. This is thus demonstrated. If *Prakṛti* is to be regarded as born as *jīva*, the latter would partake of its material nature; if *Puruṣa* is to be regarded as born as *jīva*, that would mean that the *Puruṣa* was subject to modification. Besides, these assumptions would contradict the express declaration of *Śruti* that both *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* are beginningless. So what seems the birth of the *jīva* is really the result of the association of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*, the relation being one of *adhyāsa*. As water and air would form air bubbles, so here *Prakṛti* is the efficient cause and *Paramātmā* the material Cause. What happens to the *jīvas* in sleep or dissolution is that they are abstracted within the Lord, and are undistinguished by individual traits. In this state the *jīvas* are compared to the different juices blended in honey. But in *mokṣa*, the causal body being destroyed, the *jīva* is merged in the *Paramātmān* inseparably, like rivers in the sea.

(34) With the reading *sva-vihatah sva-nirasta-bhagah*, the meaning of the second half would be, 'What object gained in this life, fleeting and transient as it must be, could possibly make happy those' etc.

(35) *S.* suggests, as an alternative rendering of the words translated as 'many holy... shrines' the following: 'many a holy stream and āśramas of the saintly, who have won endless merit'.

(39) Pseudo-ascetics have the worst of both worlds. 'from death... off'. 'The infinite pains needed for gathering wealth and the need to keep hidden their indulgence in pleasure'—these are described as 'death': (says *Dip.* on *S.*)

(40) *S.* renders 'Saguna' (vocative) as 'possessing all the six attributes of supreme overlordship'.

This verse shows what happens to the true renouncer, on the contrary. He may not escape the consequences of his own *prārabdhā karma*. But he does not mind, as he has stopped identifying himself with the body.

(41) This last verse says that the Lord (the *Saguna*) cannot be known in the plenary fullness of His auspicious attributes, because they are infinite, while the *Nirguna* baffles speech and mind. So the Vedas content themselves with indirectly showing that there is no other

reality. Doing that, they have fulfilled their purpose.

(50) This verse sums up the whole purport of the Vedas' Hymn. 'Conceives the universe': thinks and plans it to help the *jīva* to realise all the ends of life. The Lord is thus the efficient cause. By saying that He engaged in creation etc., it is indicated that He is the material cause also. If it be objected that Prakṛti and Puruṣa are respectively the efficient and the material cause, the answer is that the Lord, as their Author, is the Prime Cause. The *jīva* is called *rishi* (seer) because he, burdened with the ego, identifies the body, created for his enjoyment, with his own Self. To the devotee who falls at His feet like a stick (the special meaning *S.* gives to *anuśayi*) the Lord stands forth as *mokṣa* itself; for on reaching Him he is forthwith freed from the tyranny of his primordial nescience, the parent of the endless succession of cause and effect (Karma and the body that it brings). He may remain in the body for his allotted time, but is no more conscious of it than the sleeper of his.

The Vedas' Hymn has in material respects been differently interpreted by *R.* and *M.* Their renderings, where they differ in important respects, are briefly summarised below. The *R.* version runs as follows:—

(1) The King asked: How can the Vedas, which can only denote a thing by reference to its, class, quality or function, directly reveal the Brahma, which is wholly distinct from the worlds of *chit* and *achit* and totally free from the three *gunas*? (2) 'to provide... release': 'to provide the *jīvas* with a body for gaining the three ends of life, and obtaining knowledge of the Ātman, the act of creation etc. being undertaken by Him in a spirit of play. (13) 'that... glory': 'that proclaimed the unique characteristics of the Lord'. (14) 'by destroying... undoing': 'by destroying the connection with Prakṛti of the transmigrating *jīvas*; for Thou in Thy compassion regardest only such good as there is in them, ignoring the evil'; (with *v.r.*) the words rendered as 'for Thou... evil' would govern Prakṛti and mean, 'which commands the three *gunas* which afflict the *jīvas*'. 'as Thou... Māyā': 'when Thou workest with Prakṛti and Puruṣa'. (15) Latter half: 'The sages (the Vedas), looking upon Thee as the supreme and ultimate Cause, devote all their thoughts, words and deeds to Thy worship; how can they fail, any more than footsteps planted on *terra firma*?' (16) 'That loDEST... *gunas*': 'That causest the creation, preservation and destruction of the worlds'. 'intuited the Self': 'gained knowledge of the Paramātmā in samādhi'. (17) *R.* repudiating the Advaitin's interpretation of 'Brahma-pucchaṃ-pratishthā', renders the last part of the verse as meaning, 'When the four *kośas* are destroyed, Thou alone remainest as the abiding truth'. (18) The Sārkarakṣhas are devoted to meditation on the Vaiśvānara, present as the 'fire in the bowels'. 'the head... abode': Āruni 'meditate on Thee as present in the space between the eye-brows, up to which goes the *sushumnā*'. (19) *R.* renders the verse as meaning that the Lord enters the *jīvas* as the Inner Ruler, but remains untouched by the destruction of the bodies, and yogis meditate upon Him as pure bliss. (21) The

reference is to the incarnations of the Lord intended to bring out the truth of the Ātman. (24) 'both classes': 'Sanaka and other renouncers, and Marichi and other patriarchs, engaged in activity, as well as the gods'. 'When Thou, withdrawing Sastra into Thyself, didst rest (before creation started), neither *chit* nor *achit* nor the result of the combination of the two, nor the activity of time etc. existed'. (25) The schools criticised are the Tārkikas, the Chārvākas (who take the body for the Ātman and posit difference), the Mīmāṃsakas and the Sankhyas who deny God—they all resort to specious reasoning'. (26) Though the mind, composed of the three *gunas*, seems capable of everything it is unable to reveal Thee That standest forth as the world. But those who, by worshipping Thee become pure in mind see the world as but Thee. (27) The second half means that even those who are too ignorant to benefit by the Sāstras are redeemed if they serve the Lord's devotees. (28) 'Thyself without organs': *R. (v.r.)* 'Thou dost do everything instantly by a mere act of will'. (29) 'All creatures are united with bodies that are productive of grief and suffering due to Prakṛti. If at all they are released from Prakṛti, it is by virtue of Thy grace lighting upon them'. 'The comparison to the Void is in respect of being unsullied by anything in spite of His being all-pervasive. (30) 'eternal': *R. 'unmoving'*; he points out that the soul is atomic and that it moves (as in the state of departure from the body). 'Only those who know that the Lord controls all as the Inner Ruler, truly understand'. (31) 'Prakṛti and Puruṣa are both beginningless. Their concatenation is what is known as the 'birth' of *jīvas* and their separation as 'death'. Births and deaths are but different states'. (36) *R.* denies the validity of the interpretation of this verse by the Advaitin. The world is the product of the real (Brahma), and those who maintain that it is not real have not proved their case. (37) Likewise the argument that the world did not exist before creation and does not exist in Pralaya and therefore its existence in the interim is also an illusion is regarded as fallacious.

In the M. Version

(1) Do the Vedas reveal the Brahmā directly, or indirectly by describing His qualities and properties? (2) Man is furnished with intellect and so on, so that he can learn the Veda, recite it, acquire merit thereby and thus come to know the truth about the Lord, obtain His grace and find release. Thus the Vedas reveal the Lord directly. (14) The Vedas praise the Lord saying, 'Be pleased to remove the misery (birth and death) and ignorance of the *jīvas* which veil their true state of *jnāna* and *ānanda*. While the world lasts, the Vedas further Thy purposes; but in Pralaya their sole function is to praise Thee'. (15) (With *v.r.* for first half): 'Thou art beyond the reach of Mula-Prakṛti that prevails during Pralaya. And Thou art above all else that exists. Therefore even if one's thought, word and deed are concerned with Brahmā or any other, they would really refer only to Thee'. (17) 'Those enemies of Thine who maintain that everything is unreal, while beholden to

Thee for the creation of the world through Thy 'anupravesa. in the ego and the rest, will have only misery for their men and portion and breathe hard like the bellows. The highest among gods who spread a true knowledge of Thee and Thy lordship over Sat and Asat, will attain Thee, the Purushottama'.

(18) *M.* renders 'udaram' as '*purnam*' 'the Full or Perfect' i.e. the Brahma, and 'Śārkarakshas' as 'men of subtle vision'. The 'dahara-upāsakas' are the Mandukeyas etc. It is the Mukhya-prāna that leads them to the goal. (19) 'In all the beings created by Thee, Thou seemest to be like the *ilva*. in them and to act like it, but Thou art realized as the Cause by Mukhya-ptāna (Vayu who is devoted to Vishnu). (20) (v.r.) 'Thou promptest all actions, dwelling in all creatures and their senses, both within and without the cosmos, and even in men given to evil-doing. Even their evil-doing is their worship of Thee; though it brings them due punishment'. (From this verse onwards, *M* takes the second half of the previous verse in the Vulgate as the first half of his version). (21) 'O Thou whose truth is exceedingly difficult to grasp, men who have churned that ocean of nectar, the Veda that speaks of Thee, and have thus found release, worship Thee with sacrifices as the One Who is the origin of the Vedas and the goal to which they point'. (22) 'Some who have renounced the household life for the company of the ascetics who serve Thy lotus feet, and who do not want even liberation, look with favour on this body, the nest of their temporary sojourn, since it is a means of attaining Thee'. (23) 'Those who, instead of worshipping Thee, the Lord Narayana, give themselves up to such wrong meditations as 'I am the Brahma', will destroy their own soul. They suffer endless misery, taking unworthy bodies. Similar is the fate of those who hate those sages that worship the Lord'. (24-25) 'O Lord That liest on the body of the King of snakes, Thou alone knowest Thy essential self, not even Brahmā, since Thou knowest neither birth nor death. And when, withdrawing the Veda into Thyself, Thou didst lie down in yogic slumber, naught existed, neither the gross nor the subtle nor the combination of the two. Those who realize this are able by the grace of Vāyu to impart knowledge of Thee. (26) 'It is ignorance that makes men think that even *jivas* are bound by the three *gunas*, much more is it so to attribute to Thee That art pure knowledge a mind that is the product of the *gunas*. The gods who know Thee, the Paramātman, know Thee all as-bliss, while all *jivas* dwell in misery'. (27) 'Thou art no more separate from the worlds that Thou hast created and entered into than is the gold from the ornaments made of it. They who, realizing this truth, worship Thee, plant their foot on the head of *samsāra*. (28) 'Thou layest even upon the gods the duties enjoined by the Vedas. Those who love Thee purify the worlds. Thou art the sole and independent possessor of all power and paramount over us, and the gods pay Thee tribute' etc. (29) 'All subordinate powers go in fear of Thee and discharge their duties. And their freedom as well as bondage comes from Thee'. (30) Thou art as much above Mukhya-

Prāna, as he is above the *jīvas*. The *jīvas* are many, and all are subject to Thy control. This does not contradict the Śruti, 'The Brahma is One without a second'. (31) 'He who is enlightened by the Acharya as to the true nature of the Lord as One who knows no birth, as all-pervading and immutable, infinite and blissful, is freed from *samsāra*. Prakṛti and Puruṣa are both eternal, and as the result of their coming together, the *jīvas* are born with bodies, like water bubbles'. (32) 'All the different excellences connoted by the names of the different gods as inherent in them are found in Thee, as all tastes are found in honey. Those who realize this unique opulence of Thee have no fear from the crooking of Thy eyebrows in a frown'. In this verse, the *M.* version comes into line with the other versions. (33-34) Those who do not seek the guidance of a Guru but trust to the unruly senses driven by the life-breath, are tossed about in the ocean of *samsāra* like merchants on high seas without a pilot. Not so those who, having devoted themselves to righteousness, are not at the mercy of the mind and the senses. They do not neglect the Guru, and therefore Thou art favourable to them. (35) Who will confer *moksha* on those who do not know the Brahma but run after women? The saintly, who guide themselves by the Sāstra and are free from egoism, let their minds dwell on Thy lotus feet. (36) Such statements as that the universe is masterless and unreal, or that the *jīva* is the Lord thereof, being endowed with consciousness, are often made; and that too, is presumably inspired by Thee. Logic is totally undependable. The Veda, in its eagerness to proclaim Thy greatness, often makes statements which are apt to confuse the ignorant. (37) The *jīva* is clearly not the Lord when he is in the womb or when he is dead, and so it is unreasonable to think of him as the Lord while alive. The wise know that all excellent attributes inhere only in Thee. That they are by courtesy attributed to the *jīva* is also Thy doing. (38) Meditating on Thy qualities proclaimed by the Vedas, men are freed from *samsāra* and attain *sālokyam*, *sārūpyam* or *sāyujam* with Thee. It is by Thy grace that they are able to destroy Māyā. In order to confound the Asuras, Thou often worshippest other gods like Siva, while the gods worship Thee. (39) Even the renouncer, if he has not freed himself from desires, cannot know Thee. But Thou saves from death in the form of time and other foes, those who are launched on the path of Nivṛtti. (40) The *jīvas'* faculties do not comprehend the Lord, or Lakshmi, who controls the *guṇas* and who is under His control. But those who gain by the wisdom handed down by the great Paramahansas attain to an understanding of them. Those who are dominated by *rajas*, remain untouched by the teaching of *Śruti*, as rice protected by husk, remains untouched by dust'. CH. LXXXVIII. P. 498(1) 'Who scorns enjoyments': *R.* 'Whose appearance is inauspicious'; *J.* 'Who has abjured the use of wealth'; *M.* 'Who appears as if He were impure' or 'Who has no wealth'. 'united... Power': 'Power' may mean Pārvati (Mahāmāyā) or the *tāmasic* power He employs in destruction.

(10) 'even . . hopes': This is the implication of 'atah', acc. to *S.* *Tr.* follows this, but it seems simpler to take it to mean 'therefore'. CH. LXXXIX. P. 502 (4) 'as fire . . water': The point of the analogy is that water, which acc. to Śruti comes from fire, is used to extinguish it; likewise Brahmā's recollection of the fact that Bhṛgu was his son, served to quench his anger.

(16) 'the dispassion . . it': *S.* (*v.r.*) 'dispassion of the four kinds' (which *S.* describes).

CH. XC There are two extra verses in the Queens' 'Complaint' in *R.* and *V.* The first comes after vs. 19. It is cast in the form of a dialogue between one Gopi seeking Krishna and another, and may be rendered thus (acc. to *R.*): The latter asks, 'Ah! poor innocent, why are you looking intently at the *kunda* bud about to bloom?' The other replies, 'What use is the *kunda* to me? (meaning that it is Mukunda she wants). 'Then what is the flower of your choice?' 'The *punnaga*, which adorns the head and the ear, for whose delicious smell on blossoming the cows are eagerly waiting' The puns hide the meaning that she wants the Purushottama whom the Upanishads, whose crown and summit He is, indicate but darkly.

The second verse comes after vs. 21 and may be rendered thus: 'O, royal parrot, talk of the Yadu Lord's glory, and we shall bathe you in milk; quench the burning fire in our hearts caused by separation from our beloved with the nectar of the name of Ramā's spouse'.

P. 509 (34) After this there are 2 extra verses in *R.* and *M.* which say that Trivakrā had a son who was a devotee of Krishna and he wrote on the Sātvata Tantra prescribing sacraments for Śūdras and women.

BOOK XI

CH. I. P. 517 (12) Some commentators take 'deva' as a separate word in the vocative, meaning 'O Vasudeva'.

CH. II. P. 519 (35) 'breaking into a run': trying to do too much from excess of enthusiasm.

(36) 'following his natural impulses': *S.* In doing not merely ordained duties but also his secular avocations and actions prompted by natural inclination'. (*alt.*) 'following the impulses arising from the identification of the Self with the body and its material appurtenances by the process of *ādhyāśā*'.

P. 520 (45) *S.* s *alt.* on the basis of the equation in the Tantra of Hari with the Ātman: 'He who sees Hari as present in all creatures (as Inner Ruler) with His unparalleled and plenary powers irrespective of where He dwells, and sees all creatures as abiding in Hari in all His plenitude (unaffected by the *jīva*'s disabilities'.)

CH. III. P. 524 (29) (4) 'both orders of being': the animate and the inanimate. 'the good and the great': those who are faithful to their ordained duties, and those who are supremely devoted to the Lord.

P. 525 (37) 'at the beginning': when creation starts in every new Kalpa. It is the Sutrātmā wielding *kriya-sakti*, and the Mahat by virtue of its knowledge-potency. '*jīva*' mentioned in the verse,

stands for the ego, the limiting adjunct of the *jīva*; from the rajasic and tamasic aspects of the ego come the gods etc. referred to in the verse.

P. 526 (45) 'From death to death': after death he takes another body only to die again and so on *ad lib.*

(46) 'to provide an incentive': The idea is that the mention of fruits will induce him to study the Veda more deeply, when he will find that its real object is not to get him to perform *karmas* but to show that performance of the *karmas* without desire for the fruits thereof would alone lead to knowledge of the Self, without which there can be no freedom; when such knowledge dawns, *karma* falls away of itself.

CH. V. P. 531 (2) 'formed by the *gunas*': The Brahmana by *sattva*, the Kshattriya by a combination of *sattva* and *rajas*, the Vaisya by a combination of *rajas* and *tamas* and the last *varna* by *tamas*. (S.) (*alt.*) It might mean that the four *varnas* were distinguished by their different qualities. If is only the *varnas* that are mentioned in the order of their appearance, not the *āśramas*.

P. 532 (11) The craving for sex etc., is a natural craving, so the sages regulated the indulgence instead of banning it outright. The Veda allows use of flesh in animal sacrifices, liquor in the *Sautrāmani* sacrifice, and coition solely to married couples; and in these cases too it is careful to point out that the object is not to encourage self-indulgence. As a later verse (13) points out, sexual union is legitimate only when the object is progeny. The eating of the remains of flesh offerings in sacrifices is not to be regarded as justification for wanton cruelty. And the use of liquor in a particular rite is confined to merely smelling it. The contention of the Mimamsakas that the Vedic injunctions regarding these things are *per se* obligatory is questioned on the view that the rule here is a *parisankhyā vidhi*, which validates these practices under the stipulated conditions, but the Veda does not insist on their observance. Thus even in regard to a man's obligation to gratify his wife's sexual desires in started periods, there would be no sin if his refusal to do so arose from his revulsion against the sensual life and not from dislike of her (S.) The *Yājñyavalkya Smṛiti*, with the commentary *Mitāksharā*, also takes this view, while stating that Bhāruchi, Visvarupa and others do not agree.

P. 533 (24) 'a girdle of three strands': a symbol of consecration pointing to the fact that He is Lord of the sacrifice.

CH. VI. P. 537 (6) 'Cunningly wrought': The reference is to a particular type of verse (*Chitra-bandha*) in which the last word (or its meaning) of one verse is repeated as the first word of the next.

(9) 'who harbour desires': (*lit.*) 'evil-minded'.

(10) 'equality in power' (*sama-vibhutaye*) seems to be taken by S. as suggesting that their ambition is to obtain powers equal to the Lord's while devotees of a higher order aspire to by-pass heaven and reach Vaikuntha.

P. 538 (11) 'the yogis': S. is not very clear. Yogis intent on the Self are supposed to by-pass the *siddhis*. R. takes the reference

more plausibly, to point to the practitioners of Patanjali's Yoga, whose aim is to gain knowledge of the Sankhya categories with a view to realizing *Kaivalya*.

(12) 'the garland of wild flowers': S. offers three *alt.* interpretations, of which the last is adopted in the translation. The garland stands for the Lord's endless fame, glorified by the Vedas. His preference of it even at the risk of incurring His Consort's displeasure, suggests that He has greater love for His devotees who revel in speaking and hearing of His glory than for those who worship Him in other ways.

P. 541 (46) Uddhava pleads to be allowed to remain with Him, not because he fears he would fall into the power of Māyā,—this he is sure he will not, because of his intimate association with Him—but because he cannot bear separation even for a moment.

(47) 'Clad with the wind': naked; V. 'clad in a clout'.

CH. VII. 549 (11) The reference seems to be to the small honey-fly; two different varieties of it seem contrasted in this and the next verse, on the basis that one consumes what it gathers, while the other hoards, only to lose it to the raider along with its life.

CH. IX. P. 552 (12) 'the one object': The Lord, Who is supreme Bliss. When elimination of *rajas* and *tamjas* has secured freedom from distraction, *sattva* grows and this results not in torpor but in the mind being stilled; because *sattva* has that power too. Freed from all modalities, the mind remains in quiescence as the perfect reflection of the Lord, the object of contemplation; it is then oblivious alike of the external world, the senses and their objects, and the internal world of memory.

P. 553 (18) 'liberated soul...': Brahmā and His like, as well as others who have gained freedom.

P. 554 (31) 'From no single teacher': This is for clarifying and confirming one's knowledge of the *Ātman* by listening to pros and cons. The knowledge itself is imparted only by one Guru, who initiates him in the Vedic revelation (S.).

CH. X. P. 556 (14) This and the next fourteen verses, while accepting for argument's sake the validity of the Mīmāṃsa view, enlarges upon the miseries of involvement in the world.

CH. XI. P. 559 (1) S. suggests re: '*me vyākhyā*' (*alt.*) 'It is my view that the *Ātman* is bound or free according as the *gunas* that obey me impose bondage or not on it', but implicitly rejects it. (2) The Lord contrasts His freedom, as the Lord of Māyā, against the bondage of the *jīva* who is subservient to it.

P. 561 (28) 'To meet... thy won': V.: 'by Thy own free will'.

P. 562 (30) 'has abjured activity': The text has '*aniha*' which S. renders as '*dr̥ṣṭa-kṛityā*'. *i.e.* the Vedic *karmas*, which can be neglected only from an over-abounding passion for the worship of the Lord'.

P. 562 (40) 'any offering': The verse (*lit.*) means, 'The worshipper should not appropriate to himself what has been offered to Me by him or by somebody else'. But S. after pointing this out, opts for the *alt.* rendering (adopted in the translation) on the ground that there is a religious obligation to accept the sanctified remnants

of the offerings in worship.

P. 563 (47) *Krama-sandharbha* thus renders this half: 'He who propitiates Me thus with sacrifices etc., comes to centre his thoughts on Me and, by association with the saintly, develops loving devotion'.

P. 564 (48) 'no other way' i.e. out of *samsāra*. 'practically', because '*jñāna*' offers an *alt.* but a very difficult one.

(49) 'highly secret': The unique importance of association with the good, dealt with in the next chapter, arises from its self-sufficiency and certainly of effect.

CH. XII. P. 564 (7) 'By association with the saintly': S. offers three *alts.* for 'sat-sanga'—'association with Me', 'association with their own Self', and 'association with My devotees'. In the next verse, he defines the Gopis and other intimates of Krishna as 'the good' (*santāh*); others' association with them is their *sat-sanga*.

'the serpents...': S. suggests that 'nagah' need not be interpreted as referring to only such serpents as Kāliya; all things, animate and inanimate, which happened to come into contact with the good i.e. the Lord Himself.

P. 565 (16) His doubts are due to the fact that the Lord, having earlier asked him to perform *karma*, now advises him to give up all *karma* in complete self-surrender. In the next eight verses the Lord explains that He advised *karma* for self-purification, and devotion to the man who had achieved that.

P. 566 (22) 'two seeds': *punya* and *pāpa*; 'hundreds of roots': residual impressions; 'three 'humours': *vāta*, *pitta* and *sleshma*; 'two fruits': happiness and misery. The 'kites' are the men in the family life who have not shed desires, the 'swans' are the renouncers.

Pp. 566-7 (24) The *jīva* is liberated by knowledge and devotion from the imprisoning subtle body, composed of the three *gunas*. The question of destruction of the subtle body, referred to at the end of the last chapter, is pursued here. The three *gunas*, unlike the *Ātma*gunas, Knowledge, Bliss etc., belong not to the *Ātman* but to *Prakṛti*, and so they can be eliminated.

(CH. XIII. P. 567 (6) 'with...not-Self': The text has '*Yāvat smṛti-rapohanam*'. The suggestion is that, while the Sastras impart only meditate knowledge, it is the *sāttvic* influences that strengthen Dharma and produce direct experience of the Self, when the unreality of the body and the rest, which are the product of the *gunas*, is realized. P. 569 (22) 'particulars': Such as class, individual traits, and so on, which are irrelevant to the *Ātman*, Which knows no difference.

'the mind and...are knit together': The mind, being material, gets bound up with pleasures which are of a like character. But the *jīva* is in essence the *Brahma*. So it can be freed simultaneously from the tyranny of the mind and of the objective world by a determined effort. This takes the form of 'consciously identifying oneself' with the Lord. ('*mādrupah*' in the text is rendered as '*madabheda-bhāvanāvisishthah*' by *Toshani*).

(27) 'The states of waking...': This anticipates the objection that the *jīva*, who is subject to mutations such as those of the three states,

cannot possibly identify himself with the Lord Who is the unchangeable and immovable Soul. For the *jīva* too is that in essence.

P. 570 (32) 'Witness of the three states': Though it is the senses, the mind, and the *buddhi* that are respectively the perceivers in the three states, it is the Ātman as ruler of the senses that really perceive; and though in each state the *Ātman* is described differently as *Viśvas*, *Taijasa* and *Prājña*, it is the one and the same Witness that is thus described, as is shown by the fact that he has continuous memory of all the states.

(33) 'superimposed on Me': 'Me' stands for the Ātman.

CH. XIV, P. 571 (1) The Lord's answer to Uddhava's question is that Bhakti is the one principal means to the Supreme Good, and that the others give but transient satisfactions.

P. 572 (10) 'Some are . . . performance': In the following verses, the difference pointed in some cases refers to the goal, in others it refers to the means. S. says that the Mīmāṃsakas speak of *karma* as the means to Svarga, while the rhetoricians favour fame in this world as that which guarantees one's tenure in the other. *Toshanī* points out that truth, self-discipline etc. are spoken of by Advaitins and *yogis* as means, while love, power and indulgence are regarded as ends by those who opt for them.

P. 573 (16) the worlds': S. points out that the Lord could mean only that He sticks to the side of the devotees, so as to be able, with the dust of his feet, to purify the worlds that are within himself. An *alt.* reading 'puyeta' is explained by R. as meaning that the Lord follows His devotee, so that the dust of His own feet may purify all that the devotee's eye lights upon or body touches.

'Mentally manifesting . . .': *Prāṇāyāma* is of two kinds, one with *mantra*, the other without. The former is referred to here as favoured by the Lord, the *mantra* being the Pranava. S. gives two *alts.* The latter adopted here, would seem to suggest that the training of the Omkara and the association therewith of a bell-like note are mental acts and not physical operations, as they would be in the similar practice employed in Laya (Kundalini) Yoga. The sun, moon and fire, to be imagined in the heart-lotus, also figure in that *yoga*.

CH. XV, P. 576 (4) 'through their senses': as the deity presiding over each particular sense.

(5) 'to possess . . . this': The reading most favoured is *prākāmya*, not *prākāśyam*. While some agree with the interpretation (adopted in the translation) others take it to mean ability to do whatever one wills, like plunging into earth as easily as into water (white yet others lay the emphasis on the intensity of satisfaction without actual enjoyment; according to a verse quoted by M.) rather than on the range of the worlds of enjoyment, over which this *siddhi* confers mastery. The objects of enjoyment (according to S.) include those which, though of the visible order, are hidden from view in caves etc. The last *siddhi* is known as *kāmāvāsayitr*. The list of eight *siddhis* given in the lexica usually omit this last, while adding another, 'the power to make the body infinitely weighty'.

P. (577 15) 'who . . Time': 'kāla-vigrahe', which S. explains as 'He who ordains all things as the Inner Ruler'.

P. 578 (28) 'the appropriate way': Thinking of the Lord as the Knower of past, present and future. The power of reading others' minds is comprehended in this power.

(29) 'immune to them': The immunity to the pairs of opposites is included here.

'the man who concentrates his mind on Narayana, the Transcendent Lord (see verse 16) will get by that one act all the powers compassed by the diverse acts of concentration' (S.).

CH. XVI. P. 583 (41) 'Mental modes': The text has 'manevikārāḥ', which is variously interpreted. S. suggests that these special manifestations of the Lord's powers are created in order to induce men to meditate on His Glory, and they should not be taken too seriously. R. interprets the half-verse thus: 'These are created by My Will, as My word (the Veda) testifies'.

CH. XVIII, P. 593 (45) 'very near to Me': 'upayāti' is explained by S. as 'sāmi pyena prāpnoti'; 'upaiti' in the next verse denotes release.

CH. XIX. P. 594 (7) 'the threefold change': *Śdhyātmika*, *Ādhiboutika* and *ādhidacivṛka* (S.); other commentators taking it as referring to *Māyā* with its three *gunas*.

P. 596 (35) 'purity': both internal and external so they are reckoned as two. 'twelve of each kind': (*alt.*) 'Of these disciplines internal and external, the former are specially important for the aspirant for liberation, and the latter for those who are attached to the wordly life'.

CH. XXI, P. 605 (35) 'in all the three parts': The *Jñāna* and *Upāsana kāndas*, as well as the *karma-kānda*. 'Brahma itself': not the transmigrator.

'I love . . statement': Because there are ultimate mysteries which must not be imparted to men who have not achieved *chitta-suddhi*, since they might be easily misled into failing in the performance of Vedic *karmas*, for which they are qualified.

P. 606 (43) 'It is Me that it enjoins': The idea is that as the Pranava, which is the source and essence of the Veda points to the Supreme Lord, so the Veda, which is an extension of it, can only point to Him in every part of it, as it is the 'sweetness in the sprout that pervades all the tree' (S.).

CH. XXII. P. 609 'as well . . organ': The words 'Chitta-yuktam' are taken by some commentators as referring to the fact that the other organs can work only with the help of the mind.

(32) 'The ego . .': As the above explains the *Ātman's* difference from the products of Prakṛti but does not prove its existence, the Lord goes on to explain that it can be seen when the ego is destroyed.

'the action of that which brought about': 'That' may refer to the proximate cause Paramesvara and to His power *kāla* (time), the immediate cause.

CH. XXIII. P. 615 (42) 'firmness . . self-control': The *sātvikt dhṛiti* spoken of here is defined by the Lord in B.G. XVIII. 33.

P. 616 (51) Even supposing that the *jīva* is regarded as the experimenter, to the Paramatman, Who is in all bodies, all bodies are one, and their clashes are like those of the different members of the same body.

(52) 'If the gods . . . regarded': Every limb has a presiding deity; if one man slaps another's face with his hands, it is the respective gods that quarrel; and after all it is the same god that presides over a particular limb in every man!

P. 617 (55) 'both matter and spirit': Man, being spirit, endowed with intelligence, can purpose ends to himself, and do *karmas* for realizing them; but being spirit, he cannot change himself, which is the object of *karma*. The body, being material, can be changed, but it can't purpose ends to itself. Thus *karma* itself becomes an impossibility as it requires as agent, one who is at once non-material and material. (56) 'the *Ātman* . . . nature of time': The *jīvātman* is an *amsa* of the Paramātman, whose power *kāla* (time) is spoken of as the Lord Himself. A spark is not consumed by fire, nor is a speck of mist destroyed by a snow-fall. Actually the notion of the *Ātman* being an *amsa* of the Paramātman is itself erroneous, he being identical in essence with Him (as the next verse points out), and the Supreme cannot be touched by happiness or misery. CH. XXIX. P. 638 (12) 'with a mind that is pure . . .': This and the next two verses describe 'antaranga-bhakti' (S.).

BOOK XII

CH. VII. P. 672 'Sarga': This is the 'causal' creation *i.e.* evolution of the 23 principles from which the rest are evolved. 'Manvantara': This is referred to as 'Antara' in the earlier verse.

'born to Brahṁā: S. says that it means 'of pure descent'.

CH. VIII. P. 677 (34) 'the small fly-whisk . . . grass': The former is apparently like a handfan, made up of fibres, used to gently ward off mosquitoes etc. The word 'Vedam' in the text, meaning 'a handful of *darbh*. grass', is taken by some other commentators as a substantive qualified by 'jantu-mārjanam'; they render the whole as 'a handful of grass used for warding off insects'.

(40) 'How can I . . .': Since the Lord is the Inner Ruler, even to praise Him, the impulse and the power will have to come from Him. And yet when they extol Him by His Grace, He is infinitely pleased, and is their supreme well-wisher, being, unlike parents etc., the benefactor of the soul.

(41) 'assumed many form . . .': As Matsya, Kurma and so on.

P. 678 (45) 'all these forms . . .': The forms of the Trimurtis, Vishnu (Sattva), Brahṁā (Rajas) and Rudra (Tamas).

P. 679 (49) 'the accomplished upholders . . .': All the different schools of thought that are built on the basic postulate of difference may plausibly interpret Reality as they like. But only self-realisation will bring them knowledge of the truth, and that is not easy, since the *Ātman* is veiled by the body.

P. 44. (1) Markandeya's having been inhaled and exhaled by the wonderchild seven times running may be spoken, of as an experience that has been felt as lasting for seven *Kalpas* but had actually lasted for a second.

GLOSSARY

Adharma: unrighteousness.
Adhi-purusha: the Supreme Spirit.
Agha-marshana: 'dispeller of sins'
 a Vedic hymn (R.V.X. 190)
Agni: Fire (also the god).
Agni-hotra: Vedic fire-rite.
Ahamkāra: ego.
Ajagva: Siva's bow.
Akinchana: One who owns nothing.
Akshara: 'the Immutable'; Siva,
 Vishnu, Brahma.
Akshauhini: large army unit.
Amsa: part or fraction.
Amāvāsya: New Moon day.
Anga-nyāsa: mantric safeguarding of
 the various limbs.
Antah-karāga: 'Inner organ', mind,
 heart.
Antardhana: The act of vanishing.
Antaryāmin: The Inner Ruler.
Anushtubh: A Sanskrit metre.
Anusvāra: Nasal half-vowel.
Apāna: One of the five vital airs,
 whose course is downward.
Apsaras: Demi-goddess, expert in
 music and dance.
Apurva: 'The unseen effect pro-
 duced by the sacrifice'.
Arghya: water offerings presented to
 the guest and to the gods.
Ari-shad-varga: 'The six classes of
 enemies', desire, anger, greed,
 delusion, intoxication and ill-will.
Arjuna: A tree.
Arna: the teak tree.
Artha: wealth, object, purpose.
Artha-kriya-karita: Practical utility
 and efficiency.
Asana: A plant.
Asoka: tree with red flowers.
Ashtānga-yoga: The yoga of 'eight
 limbs', taught by Patanjali.
Asthra: missile.
Astrāya-phaṭ: A mantric formula
 for warding off evil.
Asura: evil spirit, opponent of
 'Deva' or god.
Atasi: flax.
Atharva: the fourth Veda.
Aupasanā: A fire-rite.
Autthānika: the celebration of the
 child's turning over on its belly.
Avabhrta: the lustral bath taken
 by the sacrificer at the conclusion.
Avatara: incarnation.
Avidyā: ignorance; (in Vedānta)
 nescience.
Ayana: sun's transit north or south
 of the equator.
Āchamana: Ceremonial sip of water.
Achāra: The practices prescribed by
 Vedic or other authority.
Ācharya: Preceptor or Guru.

Ādhidaivika: proceeding from the
 influence of the atmosphere, planets,
 divine or super-natural agencies.
Ādhyātmika: proceeding, from bodily
 or mental causes within oneself.
Ādhibhautika: derived or produced
 from the primitive elements,
 material.
Agama: sacred text of Saivite or
 Vaishnavite.
Āmalaka: Indian gooseberry.
Āmla: tamarind.
Amra: mango.
Anaka: drum.
Anvikshiki: The science of the Self.
Āśaya: Heart, mind.
Āśrama: (1) stage of life; (2) hermi-
 tage.
Āśraya: support.
Ātman: the soul or the Supreme
 Soul'.
Bakula: a flower.
Bali: an offering.
Bel: tree whose leaves are used in
 Siva worship.
Bhagavan-nama: 'the name of the
 exalted Lord', recital and repetition
 of which redeems.
Bhagavān: The exalted Lord (applied
 to Vishnu primarily in Bh. P.)
Bhagavata: devotee of Vishnu.
Bhakti: devotion.
Bhalla: a weapon.
Bhaya: 'Fear', also (1) death, (2) the
 Yavana Chief who harried Dvārakā.
Bhusundi: a weapon.
Bhuta: 'spirit', usually rendered as
 'goblin' etc., but generally as 'elemen-
 tal,' in this translation.
Brahmacharya: Observance of con-
 tinence or celibacy;
Brahma-hatyā: Brahmana-murder.
Brahma-rākshasa: Brahmana, learned
 in the Vedas, reborn as a demon
 for his sins.
Buddhi: intellect.
Chakra: Vishnu's discus.
Chakravaka: a bird.
Chakora: the partridge that is sup-
 posed to live on moon-beams.
Champakā: a flower.
Chandālas: classes outside the pale
 of caste.
Chandas: Vedic metre.
Charshanis: men, people, race (see
 X. 29.2).
Charu: oblation of boiled cereals.
Chātaka: fabled bird subsisting on
 rain-drops.
Chit: Thought, intellect, spirit, soul.
Chitta: intelligence, reason.

Daiva: destiny.

Darbha: kind of grass used in sacred rites.

Devadaru: Indian tree found in high altitudes.

Dharma: (1) Righteousness, (2) Code of conduct, (3) Religion.. (4) A mind-born son of Brahma, and patriarch, (5) God of justice.

Dhātā: Creator (Brahmā).

Dhyāna: meditation.

Dundubhi: big drum.

Dūrvā: grass used in rites.

Dvija: 'the twice-born', the first three Varnas; usually applied to the Brahmana.

Dviparārdha: The two halves of Brahmā's life (200000 billion years).

Dvīpa: island, island-continent.

Ekapāda: 'One-footed', a fabled animal.

Gandha: smell.

Gavaya: Gayal (species of ox.).

Ghatikā: twenty-four minutes.

Gokula: Cow-byre.

Gopa: Cowherd.

Gopi: woman of the cow-herd class.

Gopura: City-gate.

Guna: 'quality' or 'property'; the three gunas (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) of Prakṛti; bowstring.

Gunja: red and black berry, used as jeweller's weight.

Guru: Preceptor, teacher of Veda.

Hātaki: gold from a stream in the nether-world.

Ijyā: sacrifice.

Indriya: An organ of sense or action.

Ingudi: mahua.

Ishti: sacrifice.

Īśvara: 'Supreme Lord', usually applied to Siva or Paramesvara.

Japakusuma: the China rose.

Jambu: rose-apple.

Jāmbunada: gold.

Japa: muttering sacred *mantra*.

Jatakarma: Ceremony at the birth of a child.

Jāti: class (esp. socio-religious).

Jñāna: knowledge.

Jnani: man of wisdom.

Jiva: the individual soul conditioned by the body.

Jvara: fever.

Kadamba: a flowering tree; its flower.

Kaivalya: isolation; detachment of soul from matter; *moksha*.

Kalhāra: white lotus.

Kalpa: A day in the life of Brahmā after which comes the night or Pralaya.

Karma: (1) action, (2) rite, Vedic or other. *Karma-mārga*: the way of works.

Karanja: a tree.

Kara-nyasa: mystical gestures with the hand.

Karnikāra: a tree and its flower; pericarp of the lotus.

Kartā: doer, agent.

Kāmini: a loving or beautiful woman

Kala: time, death.

Kārandava: duck.

Kāya: the body.

Khanda: (1) a fragment; (2) see spl. use in Vol. I. p. 340.

Khyāti-vādas: theories of perception.

Koirdara: a tree.

Kṛshnasāra: the black buck.

Krauncha: the curlew.

Kriyā-sakti: 'power of action'.

Krośā: two miles.

Kshattā: son of a female slave (esp. applied to Vidura).

Kshetrajña: ('Dweller-in-the-field') the individual soul; the Supreme Soul.

Kula-parvata: boundary-mountain.

Kumbhaka: retaining the breath in *prāṇāyāma*.

Kumuda: white water-lily; red lotus.

Kunda: jasmine (white and delicate)

Kurabaka: a species of amaranth.

Kuśa: grass. (1) for making mats etc.; (2) for Vedic rites.

Kutaja: jasmine.

Linga-śarīra: the subtle body.

Loka-pāla: 'Guardian of the world', one of the eight gods in charge of the eight directions.

Madhu: (1) the first month (*Chitra*); (2) honey.

Mahālaya: dark fortnight of September-October, sacred to the manes.

Mahākālpa: 'the great Kalpa' (as distinguished from sub-Kalpas).

Mahitāla: the earth.

Makara: sea-monster; ear-rings shaped like it.

Mallikā: jasmine.

Manas: mind.

Manu: Progenitor and sovereign of the earth, who presides over each *Manvantara* or sub-division of a *Kalpa*: there are fourteen of them.

Mālati: flower.

Mādhavi: a flower.

Māsha: black gram.

Māyā: (1) illusion, (2) god's will.
Mīmāṃsaka: follower of Purva-mīmāṃsa philosophy or expounder of Vedic exegetics.
Moksha: liberation.
Mrdanga: percussion musical instrument.
Muhurta: 48 minutes.
Mukhya-prāna: Chief life-breath, Vayu

Naishkarmya: (1) freedom from sway of karma, (2) moksha.
Nāga: snake; dweller in the N2galoka.
Nāgakesara: a flower.
Nāma-tūpa: 'Name and form', distinguishing individuals.
Nishāda: hunter.
Nivṛtti: withdrawal from the world.
Niyama: restraint of the mind, the second step in Yoga.
Nipa: the kadamba.
Nyaya: maxim; logic.
Nyāsa: Protection of the body by touching different parts with muttering of incantations.

Paksha: a black or white fortnight.
Palāsa: the sacred fig.
Panava: musical instrument.
Parabrahma: the One Reality, the Supreme Brahma.
Paramātman: The Supreme Soul.
Paramesvara: The Supreme Lord.
Panchāmṛta: A mixture of five sweet substances, offering to the gods.
Parigha: iron club.
Parivettā: younger brother who rules the kingdom, superseding his elder brother.
Paśu-soma: Sacrifice, in which an animal is the victim.
Pattisa: a weapon.
Pāpa: sin.
Pārijāta: a flower.
Pāśa: noose or bond.
Pitrs: manes of the dead.
Plaksha: fig.
Plava: aquatic bird.
Prajāpati: 'Progenitor', esp. the patriarches, sons of Brahmā, whose progeny peopled the world.
Prajñā: understanding, wisdom.
Prakṛti: Primal matter.
Pradhāna: subtle causal matter.
Pralaya: Deluge.
Pranava: the sacred syllable Om.
Pratiloma: marriage of a woman of a higher varṇa with a man of a lower varṇa, and their progeny.
Pravṛtti: the active life.
Prajna: the jīva in the state of deep sleep.

Prāna: life, life-breath.
Prāyaschittam: purificatory penance.
Priyala: a tree.
Punnāga: a tree.
Punya: religious merit
Purāna: old sacred work treating of creation and containing legendary accounts of the past, whose authorship is attributed to Vyāsa.
Purodāsa: offering of cooked flour in a Vedic rite.
Purusha: (1) person (2) Spirit.
Purushārtha: the four ends of life.
Purushottama: The Supreme Spirit, God conceived as Vishnu.
Puraka: the filling of the lungs with air in *Prāṇāyāma*.
Purta: execution of charitable works of public utility like digging wells

Rajas: 'passion'; one of the three *gunas* of Prakṛti which induces restless activity; (adj) *rājasa*.
Rasam: flavour, taste (aesthetic).
Rājā: King.
Rāja-pnga: the betel-nut vine.
Rākshasa: demon.
Rāsa: circular community dance.
Rg. Veda: the first Veda.
Rshis: sages, seers of Vedic mantras.
Rshiti: a (bow-like) musical instrument.
Rta: truth, the primordial Cosmic order.
Rudrāksha: beads used as rosary by devotees of Siva.
Ruru: a kind of deer; a 'fabled' animal of especial ferocity that bites sinners in hell.
Rupam: form, image.

Sabhāpati: president of the (sacrificial) assembly.
Sabhya: courteous, polished.
Samādhi: deep contemplation in Yoga.
Samhitā: collection of literary matter concerning historical events or legends, or of sacred and secular poetry.
Samāvartana: ceremony terminating the celibate student's pupilage.
Sāmvartaka: 'destructive', applied to the clouds that deluge, or the fire that destroys the world in Pralaya.
Sankramana: transit of the sun from one house of the Zodiac to the next.
Sālmali: silk cotton.
Samsāra: transmigratory life, the eternal flux.
Samvatsara: the year.
Sandhyā: 'meeting of day and night' i.e. dawn and dusk; also the prayers to be offered at those hours.

- Saugandhika*: a flower.
Sarvātmā: 'All-soul'; the Lord, the Inner Ruler of all creatures.
Sattra: long sacrifice in which all participants officiate as priests.
Sattva: 'goodness', one of the *gunas* of Prakṛti, adj. Sāttvic.
Savana: the three offerings made daily in sacrifices
Sāla: Sal tree; rampart.
Salagrama: black stone found in the Gandaki, worshipped as a symbol of Vishnu.
Sāma: conciliation, the first expedient in politics.
Saman: A verse sung to a tune defined in the Sāma Veda.
Sāras: the tall crane found in Northern India.
Sāvitra: 'relating to the sun'; a particular oblation.
Siddha: adept; one who has acquired supernatural powers; and his powers are called *siddhis*.
Smṛti: Code of Dharma and law, having authority next to *Śruti*.
Snātaka: the Brahmachari who has completed his studies and returned home.
Sushumnā: a psychic column within the spinal cord running from the Mulādhāra to the Brahmaṇḍa.
Sūta: born to a Kshatriya and a Brahmana woman, who is a professional chronicler, or a charioteer.
Svairini: masterless woman (harlot)
Śabda-Brahma: the Veda.
Sārṅga: the bow of Vishnu.
Sāstra: 'science'; sacred text expounding a philosophy or social science.
Simsapa: a tree.
Sarabha: fabled bird with eight legs.
Śishya: disciple.
Śraddhā: devoutness, attention.
Śrāddha: ceremony for propitiation of the manes.
Śruti: The Vedas.
Sudra: member of the fourth Varna.
Taijasa: The *jīva* in the state of dream.
Tamas: darkness; ignorance ornescience.
Tamāla: a tree.
Tarka-mudrā: a gesture of the right hand with the thumb touching the bunched fingers.
Tattvas: truths; the Sankhya categories.
Tāndava: the dance of Siva.
Tilaka: caste mark or beauty dot on the forehead.
Tithi: day of the black or white fortnight.
Tulasi: the sacred basil.
Turya: kind of drum.
Upāsana: meditation, worship.
Uragas: snakes.
Utpala: blue lotus; water lily.
Uśtra: a fragrant root.
Vaikṛta: 'modified'; 'secondary'.
Vanamālā: garland of wild flowers.
Vanamālī: 'wearer of the garland of wild flowers (usually Krishna).
Varna: (1) Colour; (2) One of the four principal divisions of Hindus.
Varnāśrama Dharma: code of conduct applicable to *varnas* and to the people in different stages of life.
Vidyā: lore, wisdom.
Vijnāna: enlightenment.
Vikṛti: ritual (sacrifice etc.) modified or derived from principal forms.
Viśva: The *jīva* in the state of waking.
Vyāhṛti: the syllables 'Bhūh', 'Bhuvah' and 'Suvah' uttered in rites.
Yajus: The Veda detailing the Vedic rites, sacrifices, and so on; its *mantras*.
Yama: first step in Yoga for controlling the mind and the senses.
Yoga: (*lit.*) union (with God); the discipline taught by Patanjali, which has eight 'limbs'.
Yoga-Māyā: The unique powers wielded by Vishnu.
Yojana: eight miles.
Yuga: One of the four periods which together make a *yuga-cycle*, one thousand of which constitute a day of Brahmā and is concluded by a Dissolution.

WHO IS WHO

- Abhimanyu: s. of Arjuna.
 Achyuta: 'The unfailing support', Vishnu.
 Aditi, mother of the gods.
 Adhokshaja: 'He Who is beyond the reach of the senses', Vishnu.
 Agastya: Sage, patron-saint of the South.
 Aghāsura: demon disguised as snake, killed by Krishna.
 Agnishvāttas: One class of the manes.
 Airāvata: Indra's elephant.
 Aja: 'The unborn' (Brahmā); (sometimes it refers to Vishnu too).
 Ajana: 'The birthless' (Vishnu).
 Ajātasatru: 'One who had no enemies'; a soubriquet of Yudhishtira.
 Ajavithi: The zodiacal belt.
 Ajita: 'unconquered' (Vishnu).
 Akura: known as Dānapati, a Vṛṣṇi and devotee of Krishna.
 Amarka: Sukracharya's son, Prahlada's tutor.
 Ambikā, w. of Vichitravīrya and m. of Dhṛtarāshtra.
 Angāraka: The planet Mars.
 Angiras: One of the seven sages, mind-born sons of Brahmā.
 Ananta: Vishnu's partial incarnation as the great serpent, who dwells in Pātāla.
 Anasuyā: w. of Atri.
 Andhakas: A Yādava tribe.
 Andha-tāmisra: 'Intense darkness'.
 Anāhata: Psychic centre (chakra), located in the heart region.
 Animisha: 'The unwinking', (Vishnu).
 Aniruddha: s. of Pradyuma and grandson of Sri Krishna.
 Antariksha: One of the nine yogi-devotees, sons of Rshabha.
 Aptoryāma: A major sacrifice.
 Arjuna: (1) Kārtavīrya-Arjuna, captor of Ravana, slain by Parasurama, (2) the third Pāndava, (3) A Gopa.
 Arishta: A demon slain by Krishna.
 Aruna: Charioteer of the sun-god.
 Aryamā: Chief of the manes.
 Asita: A celestial sage.
 Asti: w. of Kamsa.
 Aśvins: The twins, celestial physicians.
 Aśvatthāmā: s. of Drona, who tried to slay Parīkshit in the womb.
 Atri: One of the seven sages, mind-born sons of Brahmā.
 Aurva: Sage, Guru of Sagara.
 Ābhiras: A wild tribe of Gujerat.
 Adityas: The eleven gods, of whom the sun-god was the chief.
 Agnidhra: s. of Priyavrata.
 Akuti: daughter of Daksha.
 Anakadundubhi: Vasudeva, Avasathyas: Rite establishing domestic fire.
 Avirhotra: One of the nine devotees, sons of Rshabha.
 Badari: (or Badarikāshrama) Himalayan hermitage of the Lord Vishnu incarnate as the sage Narayana.
 Bahulāsava: King of Mithilā and devotee of Krishna.
 Baka: Asura disguised as crane, slain by Krishna.
 Baki: Sister of above, named Putanā
 Bala (also Balarama), Balabhadra and Baladeva s. of Vasudeva by Rohini, partial incarnation of Vishnu.
 Bali: Asura, grandson of Prahlāda, great devotee of Vishnu.
 Bali: s. of Kṛtavarmā and son-in-law of Krishna.
 Balvala: Asura, destroyer of sacrifices, slain by Balarama.
 Barhishmat: (also Prāchīnabarhis) grand-father of Daksha.
 Barhishmati: Capital of Svayambhuva Manu.
 Bāna: Asura, s. of Bali, devotee of Siva and father of Ushā.
 Bādarāyana: The sage Veda Vyasa
 Bādarāyani: The sage Suka, s. of Vyāsa.
 Bhadrakālī: One of the forms of Siva's consort.
 Bhadrā: A branch of the Ganga: one of Krishna's wives; one of Krishna's daughters-in-law.
 Bhairava: Manifestation of Siva in His terrible aspect.
 Bharadwaja, sage, s. of Brhaspati.
 Bharata: sage-king, son of Rshabha, known as 'Jada'; he attained the Brahma in the course of three lives.
 Bhārata: (1) member of the Bharata tribe; epic Mahābhārata.
 Bhārgava: 'Descendents of Bhṛgu'; Parasurāma, Chyavana and Saunaka are among them.
 Bhava: (1) Siva; the transmigratory life.
 Bhavāni: Consort of Siva.
 Bhāgavata: The Purana; a devotee of Vishnu; whatever has reference to Vishnu.
 Bhauma: (See Naraka), 'son of the earth', Asura slain by Krishna.
 Bhima: (also Bhimasena): second of the Pandavas, of extraordinary strength.
 Bhishma: elder statesman of the Kurus, the 'grand-father' of the race, greatest of warriors and expounders of Dharma, who relin-

- quished kingly rule and marriage for his father and could summon death when he chose.
- Bhīshmaka**: King of Vidarbha, father of Rukmini.
- Bhogavati**: Capital of the nether-world Pātāla.
- Bhojakata**: City founded by Rukmi, brother of Rukmini.
- Bhrgus**: The clan descended from Bhrgu, one of the seven mind-born sage-sons of Brhma.
- Brhati**: A Vedic metre.
- Brhaspati**: Guru of the gods, proverbial for learning and wisdom.
- Bhuh**: the terrestrial globe.
- Bhuvah**: Region of the upper air.
- Brahma**: (1) Nirguna, the One Reality, unqualified and absolute, unique and undefinable; (2) Saguna, the Personal Godhead.
- Brahmalōka**: or Satyalōka, the world of Brhmā, the Creator.
- Brahman**: (used in the translation as) vocative in addressing a Brahmana.
- Brahmarandhra**: psychic centre on the crown of the head.
- Brahmarāta**: Suka.
- Brahmā**: the Creator, the first member of the Hindu Trinity.
- Brahmānda**: The Cosmic egg, from which the worlds emerge after Pralaya.
- Brahmāvarta**: the country between the Sarasvati and the Drshadvati.
- Brāhma**: (1) 'pertaining to the Brahma'; (2) in comb. with 'muhurta' it means the early morning hours 4 to 6.
- Brāhmana**: Member of the first *varna*.
- Brāhmic**: 'informed by Brahma' (in such combinations as Brāhmic splendour).
- Buddha**: Founder of Buddhism, regarded as an *avatar* of Vishnu.
- Budha**: the planet Mercury; the deity presiding over it, son of the moon-god and father of Pururavas.
- Chākshusha (Manu)**: The sixth Manu
- Chamasa**: One of the nine yogi-bhaktas, sons of Rshbha.
- Chandikā**: One of the forms of the consort of Siva.
- Chāranas**: Demigods, messengers of the gods.
- Chārudeshta**: s. of Krishna by Satyabhāmā.
- Chārumati**: d. of Krishna, m. Bali.
- Chāturmāsya**: A sacrifice.
- Chedi**: kingdom ruled by Damaghosha, fr. of Siśupāla.
- Chitraketu**: A king who became a Vidyadhara by his devotion to Ananta; reborn as Vṛttra, enemy of Indra, because of Pārvasī's curse.
- Chitraklekha**: Companion of Ushā; skilled in magic.
- Chitraratha**: King of Gandharvas.
- Chyavana**: Rshi who married Sukanyā, d. of Vṛshaparva; regained youth by the grace of the Asvins and secured for them a share in the sacrificial oblations.
- Daitya**: ('son of Diti') Asura.
- Daksha**: s. of Brhmā and patriarch, fr. of Sati; slain by Rudra's follower, and reborn as the son of the Prachetases.
- Dākshāyani**: ('daughter of Daksha') Sati who married Siva; she ended her life because of her father's slighting her husband.
- Dakshināgni**: sacred fire.
- Dantavakra**: s. of Krishna's mother's sister, slain by him along with Siśupāla.
- Danu**: w. of Kaśyapa and m. of the Dānavas (Asuras).
- Dāsārha**: member of the Dāsārhas, a Yadava tribe.
- Datta**, (also Dattatreya): son of Atri and Anasuyā, partial inc. of Vishnu.
- Dāmodara**: Krishna, so called because Yaśodā tied him to a mortar with a rope.
- Dānapati**: soubriquet of Akrura, because of his generosity in giving.
- Dānava**: (son of Danu), Asura.
- Dāruka**: Krishna's charioteer.
- Devadhani**: 'Capital of the gods', Amarāvati.
- Devaka**: fr. of Devaki and br. of Ugrasena.
- Devaki**: w. of Vasudeva and m. of Krishna.
- Devala**: a celestial sage.
- Devavrata**: Bhīshma.
- Devarāta**: Pariikshit ('saved by God').
- Dhananjaya**: Arjuna; one of the great snakes.
- Dhanvantari**: Celestial sage and physician, who rose from the sea with nectar.
- Dharmaputra**: Yudhishtira (son of the god Dharma).
- Dharmaraja**: Yama ('who deals out justice').
- Dhaumya**: Priest of the Pāndavas.
- Dharā**: wife of one of the eight Vasus, reborn as Yaśodā
- Dhātā**: Creator.
- Dhenuka**: Asura disguised as ass, killed by Balarāma.

Dhruva : *s.* of Uttānapāda, who attained the Pole-star by his supreme bhakti.

Dhruva-pada: The Pole-star.

Dhurjati: Siva.

Diti: wife of Kaśyapa, *m.* of Daityas.

Dirghatamas: sage *s.* of Utathya, br. of Bṛhaspati.

Drona: Instructor of Kurus and Pandavas, and second C-in-C. of the former in the Mbh. war.

Draupadi: *d.* of Drupada, who married the five Pāndava brothers.

Dr̥ṣṭadyumna: *br.* of Draupadi, leader of Pāndavas in the Mbh. war.

Drumila: One of the nine yogi-bhaktas sons of Rshabha.

Durgā: The mother-goddess, a form of Siva's consort.

Durvāsa: irascible sage, an *amsa* of Siva, *s.* of Atri.

Duryodhana: eldest *s.* of Dhṛtarāshtra, slain by Bhima in the Mbh. war.

Dushyanta: *m.* Sakuntalā; *fr.* of Bharata.

Dvaipāyana: the sage Veda-Vyāsa, born in an island of Satyavati to Parāśara.

Dvāpara: The third *yuga* of the four-yuga cycle.

Dvīvida: monkey-chief, br. of Mainda (of the Ramayana), slain by Balarāma for his misbehaviour.

Gada: *s.* of Vasudeva and Rohini.

Gadāgraja: Krishna ('elder brother of Gada').

Gadābhṛt: Vishnu-Krishna 'Bearer-of -the-mace'.

Gādhi: *fr.* of Viśvāmitra.

Gājāhvaya: Hastināpura.

Gajendra: Royal tusker saved by Vishnu from crocodile.

Gāndhāri: *w.* of Dhṛtarāshtra.

Gandharvas: Demigods, celestial musicians and warriors.

Gandhini: *m.* of Akura.

Gāndiva: Arjuna's bow gifted by the god of fire.

Garga: Guru of Yadus.

Garuda: *s.* of Kaśyapa and Vinatā, the eagle that was the mount of Vishnu.

Gauri: Pārvati, Consort of Siva
Gautama: Kṛpa, warrior and Guru of Parikshit after Mbh. war; married Gautami, sister of Drona; father of Asvatthāmā.

Gautami: (also Kṛpi) see Gautama.
Gāvalgani: Sanjaya.

Gaya: Place of pilgrimage; a great emperor.

Gāyatri: the most sacred of *mantras*.
Girijā: Pārvati, 'daughter of the Mountain'.

Girisa (also Girisa and Giritra): Lord and Protector of the mountain (Siva).

Go-loka: 'world of the cows', transcendental realm in which Krishna ('Govinda') rules eternally.

Go-sava: a principal sacrifice.

Govardhana: Hill which Krishna carried on His hand for seven days.

Govinda: See Goloka.

Gudakesa: epithet of Arjuna ('whose hair is in tufts').

Guha: (also Kumara and Subrahmanya) the second son of Siva and Pārvati.

Guhyaka: (also Yaksha and Punyajana) follower of Kubera.

Hihayas: A tribe, chief of which was Kārtavīrya Arjuna.

Hamsa: swan; ruddy goose; a class of sannyasins.

Hamsa-guhyā: Daksha's Hymn to Vishnu.

Hara: Siva.

Hari: Vishnu.

Harivāha: Kakutstha, who rode on Indra (in the form of a bull) in fighting the Asuras.

Haryasva: Common name of the thousand sons begotten by Daksha.

Hastināpura: Capital of the Kurus.

Haygriva: Vishnu, who taking form of a horse, rescued the Vedas from the demon Madhu; also an Asura so named.

Hālāhala: (also Kālakuta), deadly poison from the sea which Siva swallowed.

Hātakesvara: Siva.

Himalāya: 'Abode of snows', the great mountain whose presiding deity of the same name was the father of Pārvati.

Hiranyagarbha: Brahmā.

Hiranyakaśipu: Asura, *s.* of Diti, and elder brother of Hiranyaksha; killed by Vishnu incarnate as man lion.

Hiranyāksha: slain by Vishnu incarnate as boar.

Hṛshikesa: Vishnu (He 'who knows the senses').

Hri: modesty; Goddess presiding over that quality.

Ikshvāku: Emperor, *s.* of Manu, ancestor of Rama.

Ilāvṛta: Division of Jambudvīpa, where Siva is the only male.

Ilā: Sudyumna, transformed into a female; gave birth to Pururvas.
 Indirā: Lakshmi, Consort of Vishnu.
 Indra: King of the gods.
 Indrāni: w. of Indra.
 Indraprastha: Capital of the Pandavas.
 Irāvati: w. of Parikshit.
 Isa: Siva.
 Isāna: Siva ('Lord and Protector').
 Isāni: Goddess Pārvati.

Kadru: w. of Kasyapa and m. of snakes.
 Kali: Iron Age, the last yuga of the 4-Yuga cycle; its evils; strife.
 Kālanemi: Asura reborn as Kamsa.
 Kālī: One of the forms of Goddess Parvati; Satyavati, m. of Vyasa.
 Kalki: Tenth of Vishnu's incarnations
 Kamsa: tyrant ruler of Mathurā, cousin of Devaki, slain by Krishna.
 Kalinga: modern Orissa; its ruler who mocked Parasurama and had his teeth knocked out.
 Kanka: brother of Kamsa.
 Kanyakā: Goddess Umā worshipped at Kanyākumārī (Cape Comorin).
 Kapila: sage, inc. of Vishnu, promulgator of Sankhya Sastra.
 Karna: eldest son of Kunti, (born of the sun-god); abandoned by her, he joined the Kauravas; great warrior and generous giver.
 Kasyapa: patriarch, son of Marichi, father of the gods and the Asuras.
 Kavasha: A Vedic rishi.
 Kavi: (1) poet, (2) Sukra.
 Kaushārava: (Kausharavi): The sage Maitreya, disciple of Parāsara who is the teacher of Vidura in the first part of Bh. P.
 Kausika: The Kshatriya who became a Brahmarshi by his austerities, known as Visvamitra.
 Kausiki: chaste sister of above, transformed into a stream.
 Kalindī, (1) the river Yamunā, (2) one of Krishna's wives.
 Kāliya: serpent dislodged from the Yamuna by Krishna.
 Kāma: (1) love, (2) the god of love.
 Kandu: a sage.
 Karabhājana: one of the nine devotee sons of Rshabha.
 Kardama: Sage, father of Kapila.
 Kātyāyini: the goddess Parvati.
 Kesava: Vishnu (often applied to Krishna).
 Ketu: the lesser node.
 Ketumālā: One of the divisions of Jambu-dripa.
 Kesi: the Asura in the guise of a horse killed by Krishna.

Khasa: a tribe.
 Khatvānga: ancestor of Rama, who attained *moksha* in an hour by intense contemplation.
 Khāndava: Forest burnt by Arjuna to propitiate the god of fire.
 Kimpurusha: petty demigod.
 Kinnara: Ditto. (Petty demigod).
 Kirāta: hunting tribe.
 Kiritāmālī: ('Wearer of a number of crown's') Arjuna.
 Kikata: Regions in the east of India, unsuitable for Vedic rites.
 Kosala: Region round about modern Oudh, where the Ikshvākus ruled.
 Kotarā: mother of Bāna.
 Krtavarmā: Vṛshni warrior.
 Krishna: Vishnu's ninth incarnation, hero of Mbh. and Bh. P.; Krishna Dvaipāyana (Veda Vyāsa).
 Krishnā: Draupadi.
 Krodhavasas: virulent and irascible snakes.
 Kshatriya: member of the second *varna*, ruler and warrior.
 Kuja: the planet Mars; also applied to Narakasura.
 Kukuras: A Yādava tribe.
 Kuntī: m. of the Pandavas.
 Kuru-Jānghala: Mathura and adjacent country.
 Kurus: The clan that ruled in Hastināpura; more particularly the elder branch ruled by Dhṛtarāshtra.
 Kurukshetra: scene of Mbh. war and place of pilgrimage.
 Kurma: tortoise; Vishnu inc. as tortoise.
 Kuchela: Krishna's poor Brahmana friend whom He exalted.
 Kuśasthali: Dvāraka.
 Kutichaka: a class of sannyāsis.
 Kuvalayāpida: Kamsa's elephant which, set upon Krishna, was slain by Him.
 Kumuda: a personal attendant of Vishnu.
 Kundina: the capital city of Vidarbha, where Rukmini's father ruled.
 Lakshmana: br. of Sri Rāma.
 Lakshmanā: One of Krishna's wives; Duryodhana's daughter, who married Sāmba.
 Lakshmi: Goddess of prosperity, Consort of Vishnu.
 Madhu: first Asura, slain by Vishnu.
 Madhus: Yādava tribe who ruled in Mathurā.
 Madhuvana: Mathurā.
 Madhusudana: Vishnu. ('Slayer of Madhu').
 Maghavā: Indra.

- Mahat: ('The great'); the first Sankhyan category, after Prakṛti.
 Mahādeva: (The Great God) Siva.
 Mahar-loka: celestial world above the three terrestrial worlds.
 Mahāmoha: ('The great delusion') one of Brahmā's first creations.
 Mahāpurusha: (The Great Spirit) Vishnu.
 Mahātala: one of the nether regions.
 Mahāvishnu: ('The Great Vishnu') second member of Hindu Trinity.
 Maitreya: see Kānsharava.
 Malaya: mountain in the South.
 Malayadhvaja: ruler of the Pandyan country, who, cursed by Agastya, became an elephant and was saved by Vishnu.
 Mamatā: w. of Utathya, and m. of Dirghatamas.
 Mandara: mountain, with which as churning rod the gods churned the ocean for nectar.
 Manipura: a psychic centre.
 Marichi: One of the seven sages.
 Maruts: the wind-gods.
 Marutstoma: a sacrificial rite.
 Marutta: emperor, who performed a sacrifice in which all utensils were of gold.
 Mashnāra: A Vedic rite, or a place of pilgrimage.
 Mathurā: City sacred to Krishna, where Ugrasena ruled.
 Matsya: Kingdom in North India; Vishnu inc. as fish.
 Maya: Asura, master-wizard and craftsman.
 Mādhava: Krishna.
 Mānasa: Lake in Himalaya.
 Mānasottara: a mountain.
 Mārkaṇḍeya: sage-devotee, who experienced a Māyic Pralaya.
 Māyā: Illusion; the inscrutable entity that accounts for the phenomenal universe; the supreme puissance of God.
 Meru: golden mountain at the centre of the universe.
 Merudevi: m. of Rshabha.
 Mitra: sun god (associated with Varuna).
 Mrda: ('the soft-hearted') Siva.
 Mrga: deer; a breed of elephants.
 Mrtyu: death (the god Yama).
 Moha: delusion, one of Brahmā's first creations.
 Mohini: the ravishing female form with which Vishnu deluded the Asuras.
 Mukunda: ('Giver of salvation') Krishna.
 Murāri: ('Foe of Mura') Vishnu.
 Mulādhāra: psychic centre at the bottom of the *sushumnā*.
 Murti: d. of Daksha, and m. of the sage Narayana.
 Naimiśa: Place sacred to Vishnu.
 Naiśreyasa: Garden of Kubera.
 Nakula: the fourth Pāṇḍava.
 Nalakubara: son of Kubera redeemed by Krishna.
 Namuchi: Asura killed by using foam as a weapon.
 Nanda: Personal attendant of Vishnu.
 Nandana: Garden of Indra.
 Nara: sage, partial incarnation of Vishnu and prototype of man.
 Narahari: (Narasimha). man-lion inc. of Vishnu.
 Naraka: (also Bhauma and Kuja) Asura, Ruler of Prāgyotisha, slain by Krishna.
 Narmadā: River; sister of Vāsuki.
 Nābhāga: grandson of Ikshvaku, who pleased Siva.
 Narada: Celestial sage, prototype of devotees.
 Nārāyana: Vishnu; the sage who was Vishnu inc. and companion of Nara.
 Nārāyana-kavacha: a *mantra*.
 Nārāyanasaras: a lake.
 Nimi: Ruler of Videha, who died by reason of Vasishtha's curse but did not want to be restored to life.
 Nimlochani: Capital city of Yama.
 Nīrti: a Rakshasa.
 Nisumbha: an Asura.
 Nrga: See Vol. II. p. 402.
 Nyagrodha: br. of Kamsa.
 Padmā: the goddess Lakshmi.
 Paila: sage who learnt Rg. Veda from Vyāsa.
 Panis: celestial traders and robbers.
 Pankti: a Vedic metre.
 Parasurama: sixth inc. of Vishnu, who extirpated the Kshatriyas.
 Parāsara: sage, fr. of Veda-Vyāsa and guru of Maitreya.
 Parāvasu: Gandharva musician.
 Parikshit: Abhimanyu's son, to whom Suka expounded Bh. P.
 Parjanya: the god of rain-clouds.
 Parameshthi: Brahmā, Chief of the Creators.
 Parvata: A celestial sage.
 Pasupati: ('Lord of creatures') Siva.
 Paulomās: a class of Asuras.
 Paulomi: Indrāni, spouse of Indra.
 Paundraka: a King who imitated Krishna and called himself the true Vāsudeva; slain by Krishna.
 Payovrata: A rite for securing children.

- Pāka:** An Asura.
Pākasāsana: Indra.
Pāñcharātra: Vaishnava Agama of that name.
Pāñchālī: Draupadi.
Pāndu: son of Vichitravirya, and fr. of the Pāndavas.
Pārtha: '(son of Pṛtha)' applied to Arjuna and his brothers.
Pārvatī: goddess, spouse of Siva.
Pātāla: lowest of the seven nether regions.
Phālguna: Arjuna.
Phenapas: a class of hermits who lived on foam.
Pināka: bow of Siva.
Pināki: Siva.
Pippalāyana: One of the nine yogi bhaktas, sons of Rshabha.
Prśni: Devaki, in a former birth.
Prṣsingarbha: Vishnu inc. as her son Pṛthā: Kuntī.
Pṛthu: first emperor, who levelled the earth and made it fruitful.
Prabhāsa: place of pilgrimage on Gujarat coast.
Prachetas: Varuna.
Pralamba: Asura slain by Balarama.
Pradyumna: eldest s. of Krishna and Rukmini.
Prabuddha: one of the nine Yogi-bhaktas, sons of Rshabha.
Prahlāda: s. of Hiranyakasipu, and exemplar of devotees of Vishnu.
Prasena: brother of Satrājī.
Pravaha: the wind that keeps the cosmos in motion.
Pravargya: a rite.
Prāchinabarhis: See Barhishmat.
Pranāyāma: breath-control in yoga.
Pulaha: celestial sage, s. of Brahmā.
Pulastya: another s. of Brahma, fr. of Viśravas and grand-father of Kubera and Ravana.
Pulinda: a forest tribe.
Pumsavana: a rite for progeny.
Punyajana: Yaksha; a Patriarch.
Purishichayana: a sacrificial rite.
Pururavas: s. of Sudyumna (Ila) who married Urvashi and attained to the world of the Gandharvas; he was the father of Yayāti.
Pushkara: a sacred tank in Rajasthan.
Pushpaka: celestial car wrested by Ravana from Kubera.
Pushpadanta: personal attendant of Siva.
Puru: youngest son of Yayati, ancestor of the Pauravas, who took upon himself his father's old age.
Putanā: chile-murderess, slain by Krishna.
Raghu: The kings of the Ikshvāku dynasty descended from Raghu.
Rahugana: ruler of the Sindhu—Sauvira regions whom the sage Bharata enlightened.
Raivata: Father of Revati, who married Balarama.
Ramā: Lakshmi.
Rantideva: Great bhakta and man of compassion.
Rasātala: One of the seven nether regions.
Rati: w. of Manmatha, god of love.
Rāhu: The node.
Rāma: (1) Parasurama, son of Jambhū, (2) Sri Rama, son of Dasaratha (3) Balarama, son of Vasudeva and Rohini, all incarnations of Vishnu.
Rājasuya: the most elaborate of sacrifices, which only emperors could perform after world-conquest.
Rbhus: gods who protect the sacrifice.
Rsyasṛga: born to a sage of a deer; he was enticed by women's wiles to the capital of Romāpada. He brought rain with him.
Rshabha: Partial inc. of Vishnu, who taught the way of life of the Paramahansas.
Rāvana: Demon-king of Lankā.
Revati: w. of Balarama.
Renukā: m. of Parasurāma.
Rohini: w. of Vasudeva.
Rohita: s. of Harischandra.
Romāpada: King of Anga and friend of Dasaratha, whose daughter Sāntā he adopted and gave in marriage to Rsyasṛga.
Romaharshana: the Sūta to whom Veda-Vyāsa taught the Purānas.
Rudra: Siva; *Rudra-gītā*; the hymn in praise of Vishnu which Rudra taught the sons of Dakṣa.
Rudrāni: One of the spouses of Rudra.
Rukmī: elder br. of Rukmini, who opposed her marriage to Krishna.
Rukmini: Chief consort of Krishna.
Sadāsiva: The supreme Siva.
Sagara: Rama's ancestor who deepened the ocean.
Sanjvini: herb that revives the dead.
Sahadeva: the fifth Pandava.
Samyamani: Capital of Yama.
Sanaka: first of the four boy-sages, sons of Brahmā.
Sanandana: second of them.
Sankarshana: Balarama; (2) the second of the Vyūhas of Vishnu.
Sanatkumara: fourth of the boy-sages, sons of Brahmā.
Sarva: Siva.

- Sati: daughter of Daksha.
 Satrājī: *fr.* of Satyabhāma.
 Satyabhāma: *w.* of Krishna.
 Satyavati: *m.* of Vichitravīrya and of Veda-Vyāsa.
 Satyavrata: Vāivasvata Manu.
 Satyā: wife of Krishna.
 Sādhyas: a class of demi-gods.
 Sāmba: son of Krishna and Jāmbavati.
 Sāmidheni: Vedic *mantras*.
 Sāndīpani: Guru of Krishna and Balarama.
 Sankhya: 'Science of Numbers' or categories.
 Sārana: One of Krishna's sons.
 Satyaki: a Vrishni Chief, follower of Krishna.
 Sātva: a Yadava tribe; a devotee of Vishnu.
 Sakra: Indra.
 Sakti: power; son of Vasishtha; consort of Siva.
 Sakuni: Duryodhana's uncle.
 Salya: King of Madra.
 Sambara: Asura, warrior and wizard.
 Sambhu: Siva.
 Samika: sage whom Parikshit treated with disrespect.
 Sanda: Sukra's son, tutor of Prahlāda.
 Sanaishchara: the planet Saturn and its deity.
 Sankachuda: Yaksha slain by Balarama.
 Santanu: *fr.* of Bhishma, known as Mahābhisha.
 Sarmistā: *dr.* of Vṛshaparvā; *w.* of Yayāti; mother of Puru.
 Sālva: King who sided with Sisupāla against Krishna (See Soubha).
 Sarngapani-Sārngadhanvā: 'Wielder of Sārngā', Vishnu.
 Satarupā: *w.* of Svāyambhuva Manu.
 Saubhari: sage who married fifty daughters of Māndhātā.
 Saubha: Iron flying fortress from which Salva harried Dvārakā.
 Saudāsa: also known as Kalmāshapāda, who became a Rakshasa, cursed by his Guru Vasishtha.
 Sautrāmanī: A major sacrifice.
 Sesha: The serpent, partial inc. of Vishnu (See Ananta).
 Sibi: Emperor and generous giver.
 Sipivishta: Vishnu.
 Sita: Queen of Sri Rama; One of the branches of the Gangā.
 Sisumāra: 'Dolphin', the Pole-star.
 Sitikantha: Siva ('the black-throated')
 Siva: Third Member of the Hindu Trinity.
 Saunaka: Sage, adept of Rg. Veda.
 Sauri: ('Son of Sura') Krishna.
 Sonitapura: Capital of Bāna.
 Soma: the moon; the herb whose juice is offered as oblation to the gods.
 Srngi: son of Samika, who cursed Parikshit.
 Sri: Goddess Lakshmi.
 Sridāmā: Gopa friend of Krishna.
 Srivatsa: The mark (a curl of hair) on Vishnu's breast indicative of Lakshmi's abiding there.
 Srutadeva: devotee of Krishna.
 Stut-stoma: A chaunt.
 Subala: *fr.* of Sakuni and Gāndhāri.
 Subhadrā: sister of Krishna and *w.* of Arjuna.
 Sudāmā: also known as Kuchela.
 Sukra: (or Usanas), sage, *s.* of Bhrgu and Guru of Asuras; the planet Venus.
 Sumbha: an Asura.
 Sumāli: an Asura.
 Sūra: *fr.* of Vasudeva.
 Surabhi: Cow of Plenty (Kāmadhenu).
 Sutala: One of the seven lower worlds.
 Sutapas: a patriarch; Vishnu was inc. as his son, Prṣnigarbha.
 Suvar: Celestial world.
 Sumantu: sage-disciple of Vyasa, who learnt Sama Veda.
 Surya: the sun and its deity.
 Sutrātmā: 'Thread-soul', the Mahat on which, as Kriyā-Sakti, the universe is strung.
 Svadhā: ritual formula used in making oblations to manes.
 Svarbhānu: the node Rāhu.
 Svāhā: ritual formula for making oblations to gods.
 Svārochisha: a Manu.
 Svāyambhuva: the first Manu, son of Brahmā.
 Syamantaka: gem given by the sun-god to Satrājī.
 Syamanta-panchaka: the five pools of blood made by Parasurama's slaughtering of Kshatriyas.
 Taijasa: The *jīva* in the dream state.
 Takshaka: great serpent, who bit Parikshit.
 Talātala: one of the nether regions.
 Tantra: Agama.
 Tapoloka: one of the upper worlds.
 Tāmasa: a Manu.
 Tāmisra: the penultimate hell, intense darkness.
 Tāraka: Asura slain by Kārtikeya.
 Tārksya: One of the names of Kaśyapa; his son Garuda.
 Trisanku: *fr.* of Harischandra, who became Chandala by the curse of

- Vasishtha's sons and got a special heaven for himself.
- Triyuga: Mahā Vishnu.
- Trnāvarta: Asura disguised as whirlwind, whom Krishna slew.
- Trinetra: ('the Three-eyed') Siva.
- Tripura: ('the three-fortresses') built by Maya and destroyed by Siva.
- Trishtubh: a Vedic metre.
- Trivakrā: the hunchback whom Krishna straightened.
- Trivikrama: ('He who took the three steps') Mahā Vishnu who bestrode the three worlds and took them from Bali.
- Tumburu: Celestial musician associated with Narada.
- Tushitas: a class of gods.
- Tvashtā: god, who, incensed by Indra's slaying his son Viśvarupa, begot Vritra.
- Tvāshtram: Handiwork of the celestial artificer Tvashtā.
- Ucchaisraves: horse that rose from the sea and became Indra's mount.
- Uddhava: great Yadava statesman and devotee of Krishna.
- Ugrasena: *fr.* of Kamsa.
- Umā: dr. of Himavān, who married Siva.
- Unmādas: evil spirits who induce madness.
- Upananda: elder brother of Nandagopa.
- Uparichara Vasu: one of the eight Vasus, *fr.* of Satyavati.
- Ushnik: a Vedic metre.
- Uttarāyana: the sun's transit to the north of the zodiac.
- Uttama: Younger brother of Dhruva; the third Manu.
- Uttarā: wife of Abhimanyu and mother of Parikshit.
- Uttānapāda: second son of Svayambhuva Manu and father of Dhruva.
- Urukrama: Trivikrama incarnation of Vishnu.
- Urvaśi: celestial nymph, who married Purūravas.
- Vaiḥyasa: Bali's aerial car.
- Vaijayanti: Vishnu's garland of wild flowers.
- Vaikārika: (also Sāttvika), one type of ego.
- Vaikhānasa: Agama of that name.
- Vaikuntha: Vishnu's supreme abode.
- Vaikhari: articulate sound.
- Vaiśampāyana: sage to whom Vyāsa taught the Yajur-Veda.
- Vaishnava: devotee of Vishnu.
- Vaivasvata: the second Manu; Yama.
- Vaiśya: the third *varna*.
- Vaitarani: the Hindu Styx that flows through the infernal regions.
- Vajra: son of Sāmba, sole survivor of the Yādava fratricide.
- Varuna: A Guardian of the World, lord of the world of waters.
- Vashat: sacred formula uttered in making oblations.
- Vasishtha: sage-seer, mind-born son of Brahmā.
- Vasu: celestial, one of a class of eight.
- Vasudeva: *fr.* of Krishna.
- Vatsāsura: the demon disguised as calf, killed by Krishna.
- Vājapeyam: a major sacrifice.
- Vāk: speech, goddess thereof.
- Vālakhilya: sages of the size of the thumb.
- Vāmadeva: a sage.
- Vāmana: the dwarf inc. of Vishnu.
- Vārūni: strong spirits.
- Vāsavi: Satyavati.
- Vāsudeva: Krishna.
- Vāsuki: Ruler of serpents in Pātāla.
- Vāyu: wind-god, air.
- Veda: sacred writ of the Hindus.
- Vedānta/tic: philosophy based on the Upanishads.
- Vena: son of Anga: cruel king and blasphemous.
- Vibhāvāri: Capital of Yama.
- Videha: Mithilā; its King.
- Vidhātā: 'Dispenser of destinies'.
- Vidura: *s.* of Vichitravirya and a female slave.
- Vijitāsava: son of Prthu, who rescued the horse in a horse-sacrifice from Indra.
- Vijaya: Arjuna.
- Vinayaka: Lord of obstacles; Ganapathy, elder son of Siva.
- Vindhyavali: *w.* of Bali.
- Viraj: the cosmic egg.
- Virāt-purusha: the cosmic *jīva*.
- Virinchi: Brahmā.
- Virochana: *s.* of Prahlada, *fr.* of Bali.
- Vishnu: second member of Hindu Trinity.
- Vishnudatta: Parikshit.
- Vishnukrama: a rite.
- Vishnurāta: Parishit.
- Vishnuyasas: *fr.* of Kalki.
- Vishvakesena: Personal attendant of Vishnu.
- Viśvajit: a great sacrifice.
- Viśvakarmā: the celestial architect.
- Viśuddhi: a psychic centre.
- Viśvarupa: son of Tvaashtā, and Guru of the gods.

Viśvāmītra: See Kauśika.
 Viśvedevas: 'all-gods', a group of celestials.
 Visvesvara: ruler of the universe.
 Vivasvan: the sun.
 Vitala: a nether region.
 Vraja: cow-colony; Nanda's colony where Krishna was brought up.
 Vṛkodara: Bhīmasena.
 Vṛshākapi: Vishnu.
 Vṛshnis: Yadava clan to which Krishna belonged.
 Vṛttra: Demon foe of Indra, and great devotee of Vishnu.
 Yajna: sacrifice; Vishnu;
 Yakshas: demigods, subjects of Kubera.

Yadus (also Yādavas): clan descended from Yadu, s. of Yayaāti, in which Krishna was born.
 Yama: god of death.
 Yaśodā: w. of Nanda and foster-mother of Krishna.
 Yavana: a Greek; warrior named Kala-yavana, who invaded Mathura.
 Yayati s. of Nahusha, who became prematurely old by reason of a curse and exchanged his old age for his son Puru's youth.
 Yudhishtira: the eldest Pandava.
 Yuyudhāna: Sātyaki.
 Yuyutsu: youngest son of Dhṛtarashtra, by his Vaiśya wife.

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N.B.—'Brahma', with the last 'a' pronounced short, has, by an unfortunate printer's error been almost uniformly printed wrongly as Brahṁa in pp. 208-288 of Vol I.